CITY OF EVANSTON
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
SPECIAL PLAN COMMISSION MEETING

RE: CONTINUATION - DRAFT DOWNTOWN PLAN AND ZONING
RECOMMENDATIONS. Consideration of real estate market analysis and draft market assessment, development framework and implementation strategies, and comments and questions from the public and Commission.

Transcribed Report of Proceedings of a public hearing on the above captioned matter, held November 27, 2007 at the Village Hall of Evanston, 2100 Ridge Avenue, 2nd Floor, Evanston, Illinois, at 7:03 p.m. and presided over by J. Woods, Chair.

PRESENT:
J. WOODS, Chair     S. OPDYCKE
C. STALEY               L. WIDMAYER
D. GALLOWAY       C. BURRUS
J. NYDEN
R. SCHULDENFREI

STAFF:
T. NORFLEET
D. MARINO

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CHAIRMAN WOODS: Okay, I'd like to call to order the Special Planning Commission meeting of Tuesday, November 27, 2007. And we do have a quorum present.

Before we get started I want to say a few words about the role of the Plan Commission in the downtown planning process in order to provide guidance and clarification to everyone involved.

As volunteer Plan Commissioners, we have an appointed duty to advise the mayor and aldermen in a timely manner about what planning and development actions should be taken or policies adopted. We solicit comment from the public about emerging needs, opportunities, and priorities from a public perspective.

We attempt to conduct our work in a civil and non-partisan fashion based on standards and best practices. We work closely with dedicated staff and professional consultants hired by the City administration to obtain the best professional advice, even if it is not what the majority of people feel should be done.

Our perspective should be long-term and comprehensive without being unduly swayed by the
complaints of a given vocal group, the latest fashionable trend, organizing campaign, political pressure, or the opposition or support of the latest project in front of the Planning Commission.

We are not in the business of counting votes or responding to threats, demands, or mud slinging. We should always be professional, stick to the facts. And the City's best long-term interests should be our only priority.

Our definition of city should be all encompassing. It includes residents, property owners, businesses, institutions, investors, employers, employees, shoppers, and other units of government. It includes the current reality of what constitutes Evanston, as well as its future.

An important function of the Plan Commission is to make recommendations to City Council concerning the future development of the downtown. In 2006 the Downtown Planning Committee was established to develop a framework for guiding the preparation of a revised downtown plan. Two major outcomes of this Committee's work were the guiding principles for the downtown and the issuance of a request for proposals to secure a
consultant to expedite the downtown planning process.

Most recently the Committee has sent enthusiastically the draft downtown plan to the full Plan Commission for review. This recommended plan is the best thinking of an experienced consulting team with an exceptional national reputation.

The consultants have been required to solicit and consider the comments and perspectives of stakeholders. But they should not be subjected to the demands of the majority at a given meeting or within a given process if demanded policies or actions are not in the best interests of the City or best professional practice.

We thank the consultants for their comprehensive and complicated work in a very short period of time, creating a new development and regulatory framework. For a contemporary downtown is complex and requires a careful balance between the interests of the private sector and public sector objectives to ensure ongoing viability.

So at this time we're going to proceed with our agenda which is going to begin with a brief presentation of the real estate market study. For
everybody's information, the consultant is only here until eight o'clock at the latest. So that's why we're addressing this first. And it was a request of Planning Commissioners that this market study be presented at this meeting.

We will then take questions and comments from Commissioners with all other questions and comments in writing to staff. I think Tracy is going to be collecting index cards. And we hope to resume with comments on the downtown residential and traditional zones in about 35 minutes, as there were still people wishing to comment on that portion of the study when our last meeting was concluded.

Following that we will have a brief presentation on the downtown core with questions and comments to follow. And we will conclude the agenda with a period of open comments. I will remind everyone to try and stay on topic with the portion of the study we are examining at the given time and save your overall comments where he ties sections of the report together to the final open comment period.

So with that --

MS. GOODMAN: Thank you. Good evening. I'm
Linda Goodman, principal of Goodman Williams Group. We were part of the consultant team. And our specific task was to look at the real estate market assessments.

And I know many of you have had a chance to hear me do a brief overview of our findings. For those of you who haven't, there is a rather lengthy document that is on, posted on the City's website, that it says Downtown Evanston Market Assessments. And it is summarized as Section 4 of the planning document.

So some of you may have had a chance to, to read that. But for the sake of everyone here I'm going to go over it quickly, some of the key findings, and then will be available to answer questions.

But I think it's important to understand, first of all, what this real estate market assessment is and how it fits in with the plan. First of all, what it's not. It is not a market feasibility study for any particular development. And I think we purposely didn't use market analysis or market feasibility study.

This is an assessment of all the markets over a 10-year time frame. And frankly, it's a lot easier to, to look at a specific project and say how many condominium units could be absorbed at what price points
at the corner of walk and don't walk. That's almost an easier assignment than looking in your crystal ball and saying what really can, what is the market telling us about the opportunities in downtown Evanston over a 10-year time horizon.

And the second point I'd like to make is that over a 10-year time horizon there will be several real estate cycles. And it is amazing to me the older I get and the more I watch the market how quickly things can change. So at certain times the condominium market is really strong, maybe to the detriment of the, the rental market and offices based on economic conditions or interest rates may be up or down. So I think it's important that what the, we all see as the current state of the various real estate markets now, while it may be relevant and influence our thinking, we really have to think longer term than that and realize that there will be numerous cycles over a 10-year time horizon.

So what we, what I was really tasked with in working with my partner Christine Williams, was informing the plan. What could the market bear? How did, how should the planners take into consideration the various land uses? What would, what would be possible,
because we certainly want the plan to be realistic. It doesn't necessarily mean you have to embrace all of the opportunities as we see them. But this is sort of laying out what are the development opportunities. And we hope that that informs not only the, the rest of team in terms of developing the plan, but also the City Council, the Plan Commission, and others charged with the public policy decisions.

And since we were taking sort of an expansive look, this is how we sort of framed our initial, our thoughts. Let's look at, we focus really on residential, retail, and office. But let's look at all the land uses and try and understand the competitive position of downtown Evanston long term. What are the advantages? What do we know? What's not likely to change over a 10-year period? And how could, through public policy and other initiatives, how could the City of Evanston embrace that or take advantage of those opportunities?

And certain things, I'm not going to go through every sell here, but certain things aren't going to change. The, at least hopefully the transit options will still be here over the ensuing 10 years. The fact
that you're not exactly conveniently located to O'Hare and the expressway network will influence the choice of some office tenants. The fact that Northwestern is here has certainly an implication on the residential and retail markets, as well as the hotel market. So those are the kinds of things we, we looked at long term.

And I think, another one, I'll get into retail more specifically in a minute. But Old Orchard isn't going to go away. So I think when looking at the retail opportunities, that's something that we, we have to consider.

But that's the kind of thinking we, we started out with. And for each of the major land uses, residential, retail, and office, what we did is tracked historic trends. But we're not so naive to think that historic trends are just going to continue out into the future.

So after we looked at historic trends we looked at a snapshot, most of which was done during the summer months, of what's going on today. So already there are certain things that have changed a little bit. But we did have a snapshot as market conditions as of this summer. And then we looked, took out our crystal
ball, and really looked at the demographics, the
economic trends, and some of our other ways of measuring
what we see as the future development potential.

On residential, as I said, we did start with
the past 10 years. How many units have been completed?
And annual average over the past 10 years of 146 units
per year. More recently it's been above 200 units per
year. And that was reflecting Sherman Plaza, the Optima
buildings, and a, quite frankly, a very bullish and
exciting time in the condominium market. So that's
looking at the, what has happened in the past. We
obviously were focused on the number of units that were
either approved or being discussed by the Plan
Commission.

And then from there we launched forward and
said, is this sustainable, this level of interest in
living in downtown Evanston? And we looked at a lot of
economic and demographic indicators, the affordability.
We did part of the input from the focus groups on who
was moving to downtown Evanston and why.

And our conclusion is, that yes, the demand,
even though it's, with the credit issues now, the
condominium market has certainly slowed down and is in a
slump now. But there's no reason to think that long
term over the next 10 years that the residential market
in Evanston won't continue to be strong. And we're
including in this both rental and for sale units.
Because in times of higher interest rates that tends to
favor the rental market. And we do feel that the rental
market is a strong component of the downtown Evanston
housing mix.

Looking briefly at office, I think this is the
land use that surprised us most. Because for a long
time Evanston had what we would consider a surplus of
office space, which is typically thought of as vacancy
rates above 10 percent.

But we looked at Class A, which is the most
expensive, highest quality space. Class B, Class C,
these designations were not ours. But we're, we began
with a co-star inventory, which is a reputable secondary
source of office information. And with a few
adjustments that we made based on certain things that we
knew were happening this summer, you can see that in all
classes of space the vacancy rate is below 10 percent.
And that to us indicates a relatively tight market.

And as we had our focus groups this summer
with office tenants, office developers, office brokers, property managers, it was in fact, people were saying to us, at all levels of space, those looking for more affordable office space, as well as those who were willing to pay market rents and were delighted to be in downtown Evanston because of the access to the knowledge-based workers, because of the amenities downtown, they didn't want to be in a business park over in Libertyville or over near the expressway. They like the ambience. And they were willing to pay market rent. And there frankly aren't a lot of choices for the Class A tenants either.

And so this sort of confirmed that, even though Evanston's office market is relatively small at just over two million square feet, it's an important part of the downtown mix. It provides the basis, not only for real estate taxes, but also the workers are the ones who support the restaurants during the breakfast and lunch hours and contribute to the overall vitality of downtown. Whoops. I'll stay on that for one more second.

So we did feel that there was a strong, strong is too, is not the right word, a demand for between 50
and 100 thousand square feet of additional office space over the next 10 years. And so that is not a huge amount, but I think an important segment.

Turning quickly to the retail picture. Goodman Williams Group is part of a team headed by Mid-America that had done a retail market study a few years ago. And so we were able to update our inventory of ground floor store fronts in downtown Evanston. We had a series of students with clipboards going around address by address and seeing what had changed over the ensuing three years. And I think that certainly Sherman Plaza has added to the vitality of downtown Evanston's retail offerings.

The graph you see here shows the bar on the left as 2000. The one in the middle is 2003. And the one on the right is 2006. The bar in its entirety is showing taxable retail sales for the City of Evanston. And the blue base on the bottom is how much of that is coming from downtown.

And so the good news is you can see the tax, the taxable retail sales has been going up. And downtown is contributing now over 21 percent of those sales. So it's always good when you can get a bar chart
with bars that are going in the right direction.

When we're calculating our future demand for retail, this is not a segment of the market that has unending potential, because frankly, of Old Orchard. And I think that there is a finite amount of additional retail that can be supported in downtown. And it has to be complementary to what is being offered with the redevelopment of Old Orchard. And that does have a heavy component of restaurants and more entertainment kind of retail uses. Plus, as the downtown population continues to expand some of those retail uses really, such as food or home furnishings or some of the daily conveniences, will be fueled by the growing residential base downtown.

So here is a summary of those three major retail, real estate sectors, retail, office and residential. And we gave a range. Because it is a crystal ball. And so on an annual basis we see 10 to 12 thousand square feet of retail a year, which comes to a hundred to a hundred and twenty thousand square feet. That's a relatively modest amount.

One other comment on the retail. I know people were concerned that they were losing a lot of the
local independent stores, that so much of the new retail seemed to be national tenants. And our survey revealed, of course it's hard to actually define what's an independent. If you say that they only have one outlet or one store, then things like Argo Tea, is that national or regional? Now I think at last count it had five or six establishments. But it's local ownership.

So what we did is said, any establishment with local ownership and five or fewer establishments, we called local. And by that definition, which admittedly was arbitrary, 66 percent of all store fronts in downtown Evanston as of this summer were local as opposed to national chains. And that is down a little bit from a few years ago. But it's still, two-thirds of the store fronts are locally owned.

On the office, again, I mentioned 50 to 100 thousand square feet over 10 years. And again, that's not a lot. That could be one single-purpose office building and several mixed-use buildings. We could talk about how best to accommodate office. I think it is difficult because most of the tenants in Evanston are small tenants.

So if you look at the last building that was
developed in Evanston, McDougal Littell, could take
50,000-square feet and be an anchor for 100,000-square
foot development. And that allows the developer to get
financing.

Well there aren't many 50,000-square foot
tenants in Evanston. Your profile is much more smaller,
professional, and financial service firms, knowledge-
based workers, consultant firms, creative architecture
an design firms. And very few of those would be large
enough to anchor an entire building.

So it might be a better strategy to either
rehab some smaller spaces or perhaps to include a floor
of office space or office space on an upper floor of a
mixed-use building where on a second floor, for example,
where retail might not find it as appropriate.

And residential, we did say that we are most
bullish on the residential market, which as I said,
includes both rental and for-sale units. And we could
see 150 to 200 units per year, again, on average. So
some years wouldn't have that. Some years would have
several projects.

But that's our feeling of what the development
potential might be. And early on we worked with the
planners and made sure that as they began to look at their opportunity sites and began to put the plan together, they could see to what extent it was easy or not so easy to accommodate these uses and where they should be. Retail want to be in certain streets. And so we fed into their thinking with the plan. At least I hope we did, right?

Two more tables real quick. This one just says, okay, if we assume that the retail is worth about $300 a square foot, which is actually conservative. Some of the retail space at Sherman Plaza and at Church Street both sold in excess, at prices in excess of $300 a square foot. But that's like a nice, conservative number.

If we assume office, new office space would be worth about $200 a square foot and if we assume that the average residential unit were 400,000, just to give you a sense of the market value that this could add to the downtown, we just did the simple multiplication. And you come up with a base case of 640 million dollars of additional market value.

And we were asked, we did not do an economic impact or a fiscal impact study. But we were asked to
translate, what does that market value mean for potential property taxes that could be generated over this 10 years? And since we were not asked specifically to do the fiscal impact analysis, the City gave us some assumptions to work with, which we agreed with. These are actually conservative assumptions that residential property tax would be about 1.8 percent of market value and that it's reasonable to assume that retail taxes, these are actually conservative for Evanston, but compared to other parts of the Chicago metropolitan area, these are high taxes: seven dollars per square foot for retail and six dollars per square foot for office.

And so what we did, just to look at the math, we took an annual average, and again, that might not be exactly how the additional development would occur. But we took it out 10 years. We did not inflate it. It's all in present dollars. And we didn't discount the 10 years worth of. So this is just to give you a very rough sense of what this level of development, should it actually occur, should you embrace it, should you want it as part of a, what it might begin to generate.

And this is total taxes. So not all of this
would be going to the City of Evanston. This would be
going to the, collected by the county and going to all
the taxing jurisdictions. But again, this is just to
give, give a feel for what, what this level of
development might mean in terms of property taxes.

And with that, I will end my prepared remarks.

I did have a couple questions that I know had been
asked. And I don't know, Mr. Chairman, if you'd like me
to just go ahead and answer those.

The mayor, when we kicked this off early in
the Spring, I think it was, had asked me, what about
some of the entertainment uses? What about a bowling
alley? And I did include in the, in the retail section,
a little bit about some entertainment options that might
be appropriate for families and for some of your younger
residents and visitors to Evanston. And I used, so
there is some information in there.

And I don't see why some of those uses
wouldn't be supported by the market and wouldn't be
appropriate in downtown. And specifically, there's a
whole new generation of more urban, hip bowling alleys
that aren't, don't have a sea of parking. And I think,
Elmhurst, for example, has 7, 10 lanes in their
downtown, adaptive reuse of an existing building without separate parking. And so the issue on the, some of the entertainment uses is not whether there's enough of market to support it, but really do the economics work and do you have a building or a site that would be appropriate. But some information is included there.

And I was also asked to provide some additional information on the, on the rental housing market by Alderman Rainey. And there is some information. We do have, I think one of the advantages in putting together a document like that is there's a lot of information that hopefully will be of use to the Plan Commission and to City staff. And there's information on the major rental buildings downtown and their rents and some information on occupancy.

But basically, even though there will be years or times when individual apartment buildings may have some vacancy issues, we're pretty strong on the fundamentals of the rental housing market. And interestingly, the rents in downtown Evanston are fairly close to the rents in downtown Chicago. Whereas the prices for condominiums are way lower in Evanston than they are in downtown Chicago. So that's one of the
reasons I think that investors are quite interested in
the John Buck develop rental apartment building which is
now currently on the market.

The last question I know received some
attention on Evanston Now, was how on earth can I say
that with more condominium units being added to the
downtown, how that wouldn't depress prices? Because we
all know when the supply goes up, the price goes down.

And that's just not the way it works in a real
estate market like this. In fact in order to keep
prices high, new product almost has to be introduced,
certainly over a 10-year period. Because typically the
new product that comes, the new market rate product that
comes in, comes in with a higher level of amenities and
often a higher price point and lots of marketing. And
so it tends to not only bring up prices, but also
attract more, more interest in downtown Evanston. And
when you increase demand, that's what keeps the prices
from falling.

So again, in any given year there may be a
glut of two-bedroom units for sale that may hold prices
down. But as we look at the market overall, increasing
the number of units certainly does not have a depressing
effect on the, on the prices. And I think a look at what's happened in downtown Chicago provides an extraordinary example of that.

So those were the three questions I knew I had to address tonight. And I'd be happy to answer any others.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Okay, first we're going to ask for questions from Commissioners. Yes, Chuck.

COMMISSIONER STALEY: I had one on the, if I could see that chart again. I just don't understand the difference between base and opportunity. What does --

MS. GOODMAN: You know what? I just looked at this and they're reversed.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: It's flipped.

MS. GOODMAN: I'm sorry.

COMMISSIONER STALEY: Oh, thank you.

MS. GOODMAN: Because actually, we put this table together and originally opportunity was on the left. And I said at the last minute, switch it. And so it didn't get switched properly. I will correct that. I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Johanna.

COMMISSIONER NYDEN: How do you think that
downtown Evanston retail can compete with Old Orchard?

You know, what's going to get somebody to come to
downtown Evanston before they go to Old Orchard?

MS. GOODMAN: That's a great question. And I
think that's one that the retailers actually are really
focusing on. Part of it is that the kind of apparel
that needs to be near a department store. And there are
certain of those that really will choose to be in a mall
setting at Old Orchard because that's what they know and
they have relationships with Westfield, the owner of Old
Orchard.

But there are others who look at the
demographics of the Evanston households and the
Northwestern students. And we're seeing a lot of the
new retailers who are coming in are really targeting a
younger demographic. So that's part of the answer.

You will get more local stores in downtown
Evanston probably than you will in a mall like Old
Orchard, a higher proportion. You won't have a food
court. You'll really have some nice restaurants. And I
think the movie theaters and the restaurants are really
one of the strengths. So that there are those who want
to be, to be near the restaurants and the employment
base and just like the feel of a downtown.

There are others. I talked to one of the jewelers who's been here for a long time who said, frankly, I can be anywhere. Because I've got my customers and they know how to find me. So she's a destination and certainly doesn't want, she just doesn't want to be at the mall and has found space that works for her. And her customers come to her.

So it's a mix. But I think one of the interesting things about retail is that it's constantly evolving. So that, I mean, when you think of Old Orchard, they're reinventing themselves or re-tenanting themselves every, about 10 years, which is pretty amazing. And actually they've done a good job of that.

So then it becomes the responsibility for the developers and retailers who want to be in downtown Evanston to figure out what their market niche is and how they can complement and not compete head on.

The other comment to that is that it's interesting in our study a few years ago, our 2004 study, we did a shopper intercept survey that showed the trade area for those who are shopping and coming to downtown Evanston. And it was a, not surprisingly, but
the data really showed this, that it was a thin strip
along the Northshore and concentrating on Evanston and
then going all the way to Irving Park. So that a lot of
the North Side of Chicago thinks of downtown Evanston as
their downtown. And especially if they're transit
dependent, they're not going to be as interested in
driving to Old Orchard. So it's not an east-west trade
area. It is a very north-south trade area.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Anyone else?

MR. MARINO: We're ready for some audience
questions. We have some here. Thank you very much.

First question, the questioner indicates that
they feel the 10 percent office vacancy figure is a good
gage of the market. What is the retail vacancy rate and
what is a good gage for retail vacancy?

MS. GOODMAN: As of our inventory this summer,
the retail vacancy was seven percent. But that is based
on the number of vacant store fronts and not on the
square feet. And so that becomes kind of difficult.
Because we didn't know the size of all the store fronts.
And when you have some larger vacant spaces like the
old Barnes and Noble and the old Borders. So seven
percent is just based on number of store fronts.
If you look at, I think looking at Evanston's retail vacancy is kind of tricky. Because there are those large, the Barnes and Noble, the old Barnes and Noble space, for example. I don't think that reflects the fact that there's a weak market. I think there's a, the fact that Barnes and Noble is still paying rent on that space and there's no economic incentive, frankly, for the out of town landlord to make the improvements or to demise the space so that it could be successfully released. So I'm not sure that some of the larger vacancies in Evanston, in downtown, reflect a weaker market condition.

But basically, under 10 percent, I think, is also a good gage for the retail market. But it really should be done based on square footage, not just on number of store fronts.

MR. MARINO: Thank you. Second question. There are really two questions that deal with this subject. And it's the issue of how to retain the locally owned retail as development takes place. Comment here is, replacing a building currently used for retail or office space with a condominium can require locating such locally owned businesses. And
what issues would you raise in that context?

And the related question, if I can add, is specifically with regard to Sherman Plaza. The question is, which of those tenants would be categorized as local ownership? That does acknowledge, the questioner acknowledges that Lakeshore Eye Care is a locally owned business in Sherman Plaza.

MS. GOODMAN: Well, first of all, I think, I'd like to defuse the local versus national. It's not either/or that I think we should be focusing on. I think any healthy retail district should have a mix of national tenants and local tenants.

Because often times the national tenants, again, have the advertising budgets, the name recognition, the predictability of the merchandise that tends to bring people. And then if they can also, once they are there, discover some of the unique shops that really give a downtown or a business district its own special character, I think those are, that's the mix that everybody should be striving for.

It's really hard to find where that equilibrium is and to keep it. And usually the national retailers are the ones who can afford the rents that
need to be charged in newly constructed spaces. Because those are, they can support the cost of new construction. So that's why you see a preponderance of national tenants or known names in the newer construction.

So the way to keep the cherished local retailers is to make sure that you preserve some of the historic buildings and some of the, and we'll talk about the character districts that have smaller spaces that work really well for some of the local retailers. And again, it's very hard.

I've seen a number of communities try to legislate who would be allowed in our Business district. And that gets really tricky. Because that doesn't allow the Argo Teas to add more. You know, all of a sudden they've become, from a successful entrepreneur, you don't want to penalize them and not allow them to grow. So sometimes it makes more sense to try and regulate things like drive-thru banks or fast food with drive-thru or things that are more physical in nature rather than trying to designate what kinds of tenants are acceptable and what kinds aren't. Because retailing just moves too quickly to do that easily.
MR. MARINO: Thank you. Next question. What is the impact of Northwestern University students, staff, and visitors on downtown retail sales? Did your study consider that?

MS. GOODMAN: Absolutely. And I think when we did some fairly detailed quantitative analysis of expenditure potential. And our primary, our primary market for downtown retail really was Evanston residents, both downtown and those living outside of the community.

But we did also, so the Evanston students and faculty and staff could also be a subset of that. So we didn't want to double count them really. But certainly the students living in and around the downtown and in Evanston contribute significantly even though they have meal plans and may not have the expenditure -- You'd be surprised, actually, at how much expenditure potential they have.

Also we did talk to Northwestern and had the number of visitors that their admissions office is bringing. And it's a staggering number that has been going up. And that certainly is, every family who comes with a junior or senior in high school, some of them
stay overnight. And the hotels are doing well. And certainly they eat meals. And often times they buy more than Northwestern sweatshirts and tee-shirts. So certainly Northwestern is a vibrant and important component of the residential and retail and hotel sectors.

MR. MARINO: Next question concerns assisted living in a growing market, acknowledging that assisted living is a growing market. Given Evanston's demographics, how will the assisted living market impact the other market sectors?

MS. GOODMAN: Good question. And our looking at the residential, our 1,500 to 2,000 units over a 10-year period, does not include age-restricted assisted living or specifically senior housing. So that, obviously there's a lot being added to the supply right now. I think that that's as an important a component to the downtown market as the young students are.

And I think one of the real strengths of Evanston is, people talk about diversity. I think the age and income diversity of those who are shopping and frequenting public spaces and being in downtown Evanston is really one of the strengths. And so there are
certain restaurants that cater to different segments of
development at different times. So if you come a little
bit earlier on a weekday, you might find older residents
having dinner. And the students may come in to that
place later on.

So I think that, I don't see a negative impact
at all from the age-restricted senior buildings in
downtown. I think they're an important component of
demand.

MR. MARINO: Next question. What would

Evanston's share be of the property tax? I think I'll
answer that one.

MS. GOODMAN: All right.

MR. MARINO: Not a fair question for Linda.

Eighteen percent approximately, basically is

the City's share. School districts are roughly 66

percent. And the rest is the county and other smaller
taxing districts, exotic ones like the Mosquito

Abatement District.

Next question deals with a percentage of

non-taxable properties in the Central Business District.

Good question. I don't have an exact number off the
top of my head. But certainly that would include
streets and alley, parks, churches --

MS. GOODMAN: YMCA.

MR. MARINO: Right. Not-for-profit institutions that have tax exempt status in the downtown. And Masonic Temple, I think, that's still there as well. But we'll get a more precise figure to the Plan Commission in response to that question.

MS. GOODMAN: And also I think that even though I was asked to come up with how much real estate property tax would all this development, hypothetically, generate, I do think it's important that even the post office and the library and the, at the other non-tax generating uses do have a vital role as part of a healthy downtown because they attract people. And even though they don't pay property taxes, if you go to the library, you're likely to go get something to eat. Or if, a lot, a high percentage of people still go to the post office to deliver, to deliver packages or letters or whatever.

And so they do have an important function as part of downtown. And certainly that's true with cultural and other things. Anything that attracts people to downtown is really good for your downtown.
MR. MARINO: How dependent is the forecast on basically 40-story plus buildings? Or one specific building, I guess, the questioner's alluding to here. And so the question would be, how dependent is the forecast on that size of a building?

MS. GOODMAN: We did not, again, our market assessment didn't take into account any particular building. We were looking at the demographics. We were looking at past absorption. So it was really then, how could you accommodate it?

And frankly, there are a number of different ways to accommodate it. You can have one tall building and more shorter buildings. You can have more medium height buildings. Or you can say that that's not really, you know, it's great that so many people want to live in downtown Evanston, but that's not what we want in our downtown. And so we're not going to meet the potential demand.

So I didn't consider any particular building. Only to give a sense of, for the recent ones that have been selling and as a gage of developer interest. And also we did talk to, we, among our focus groups, we did have some of the new residents and wanted to find out
why they moved to downtown Evanston, what they saw.

So that's how we thought about it. But it was certainly not dependent on any one particular building of any particular height.

MR. MARINO: Thank you. Next question. With a project average condo price of $400,000, are there any contingencies for affordable housing in the area?

Maybe I could start with a response there. Related to planned developments, the City has an Ordinance in place that requires 10 percent of the units to be affordable or a fee-in-lieu contribution to be made for the City's housing fund which would finance affordable housing off site.

And the next related question is, will developers buy themselves out of their responsibilities?

There is an option for fee-in-lieu in that Ordinance. But also I think Kirk and Tom can speak to it later. In the public benefit's section that they're recommending there is also a provision in there, a bonus provision for affordable housing in excess of the 10 percent requirement. You don't get any benefit in terms of potential height additions for the required part of the 10 percent required by Ordinance. But above that
they're recommending that that be considered.

I think, Mr. Chairman, we're finished with
questions from the audience on the index cards.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Thank you, Dennis.

With that, last we left off we were sort of in
the midst of people wishing to speak about the
traditional and residential downtown zones. And so I
would ask for a show of hands for people who would still
wish to speak on that subject. Okay, we have maybe five
or six people.

We're going to do what we did last time. So
if one person, the first person could get up and state
your name, address, and then give your comments. And
then if people would sort of fill in behind them, that
would be great so that we can move through this as
efficiently as possible.

Oh, I guess, Stuart reminded me, my vice-chair
is very good about these things, being a lawyer. We
need to swear everybody in.

(Witnesses sworn.)

Okay, thank you. We'll continue.

MS. GREGORY: My name is Irene Gregory. I
live at Sherman in Evanston. I've done my best to come
to meetings and follow what's going on here.

But I'd like to start to say that I'm sure that you've all heard the state of our planet and that it's going down hill. And I am appalled that Evanston does not have a ruling that anything being built here has to be green.

Now, other things I've read in the newspapers are that if somebody puts up a building and it is green, they get a reward maybe for five more stories. Isn't the reward in building a green building, that's the reward in itself?

I'm appalled that it would be considered to build a 40-some story building across the street from the library. Why dwarf all the lovely construction that would be around it? There it is, sitting up in the air like a sore thumb casting shade where there's been sunshine. There has to be a better plan. That's my thought.

I'm wondering if all these construction people are like children that have to be rewarded for doing the right thing. You know, if you hang up your clothes, you straighten your room, you set the table, you pick up the dishes. Why do they have to be rewarded for doing the
right thing? I'm really puzzled. I think we have to get real. Thank you.


COMMISSIONER WIDMAYER: Can I just make one comment in that respect? I wish you'd make that, your presentation on the economic viability, you know, economics of the environmental buildings, to Council. Because that's really part of the building code. And I think it's a good thing to have and I think you should do it. But I think that, it would be a good thing to talk to Council about incorporating in the building code. You know, we have it here because it's not in the code. And it probably should be. So please take that one forward. Thank you.

MS. SHEVIC: My name is Shirley Shevic. I am reading a statement that Jessica Feldman wrote. She is unable to be here tonight.

The downtown plan as presented has merit, but don't be so prideful of your plan that you are tempted to reject rather than embrace the community's reaction to it. This community puts a value on getting our money's worth. And a plan that gathers dust because it
does not realistically and practically reflect the value
and vision of the community will lose support and favor
quickly.

A front loaded process cannot afford to then
neglect noticing the role historical and current impacts
need to play in the process. During the visioning
process height was not decried because it was an
abstract built on the existing height we now live with.

But the reality is that two previous
development proposals for 37-story structures Hovies
first 800 Elgin Road and Rozak’s Fountain Square were
scoffed -- by the Commission and public opinion before
they even made it to the final drawing stage. And the
stage --

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Hold on, hold on one second.

MS. SHEVIC: Thank you. All right, I shall
continue where I left off. The mistakes referenced by
Miss Westerberg in her comments at the last session
should not have elicited the defensive response from the
consultants. They were not your mistakes of which she
spoke, but mistakes made in the City's approval process.

But these approval remorse situations should
have been noted as you did your work. Maximum height
proposals, as you suggest, for northern Emerson Street
and of the form-based zoning plan are, as has been
stated, based on existing approved project heights.

These developments have neither the whole-
hearted acceptance of the neighboring community, of the
community at large, nor even the bodies charged with
their approval. In many ways they may have been an
anomaly. And we have yet to see if they become a
reality. Just because something happened doesn't
necessarily have to provide a precedent for enshrining
it.

Having received seeming nods of approval to an
abstract idea of height during the visioning and
Charrette phase of the process, the consultant team have
apparently not taken note of the undercurrent roiling
and growing outspoken uproar as the residents have
looked long and hard at the reality of a 49-story model
of what appears in our midst.

No matter how much you protest, no connection.
A maximum of 42 stories for the same height comes
through as too close to simply be a coincidence.

Commissioner Schuldenfrei's excellent self-
assigned homework assignment presentation to the public
and Plan Commission put the issue of height in a very understandable and visual context. She used, she used feet of commonly known buildings such as John Hancock, Chase Bank in Evanston, and so forth to contrast with the feet of the proposed 49-story building. Without any obfuscating language or slight of prose, the magnitude of what was being proposed became crystal clear to the audience in attendance.

I seriously propose that all discussions of proposed building heights be couched in terms of feet, minimum and maximum, as could occur with various bonuses and require at least three real life, commonly known examples for contrast and to better frame a mental picture of the end product for the deciders and those who will have to live with the result long after the downtown plan consultants and future developers go back to their own hometowns.

Lastly, a word about community involvement. For the plan to be credible in the view of residents, the final version needs to include a suggestion for how to include a role for community participation in the approval process for downtown and other major developments. This will minimize the concern that the
public is being completely cut out of the process by form-based zoning, which could rely solely on administrative check off approval.

The more concrete the how is shown in this downtown plan, the more likely it will be acceptable to the public. Don't merely say that it another aspect that will be left up to the future implementation process. Thank you very much on behalf of Jessica Feldman.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Thank you. Next.

MS. SILVESTRIE: Hi. I'm Amy Silvestrie. I live at 525 Grove.

I'm concerned about consultants, and I, with their, what they recommend. And this is very brief. I read this in the Evanston Review. And I'm just, I'd like a response, please.

To avoid case by case skirmishes over development proposals that now prevail, consultants are recommending that certain projects could be approved by right with just administrative review, rather than going through a public hearing process.

Under the consultants' form-based code proposal buildings as high as 25 stories in the Central
Core area would not go through the public review process, but could be built subject to administrative review.

Could I get a response to that, please? Is that really what the consultants are recommending, to bypass public review?

PARTICIPANT: I hope not.

MR. BISHOP: We have in the conceptual zoning framework piece of this, which suggests a possible implementation-type scenario for the plan, suggested that the base height levels recommended in the plan could be achievable through an as of right review process against a known set of development standards. So I think that's an accurate representation of a recommendation in the plan.

MS. SILVESTRIE: Well, I, I don't think that's fair to bypass public review. Because then we wouldn't have these hearings that are so important to us. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Next.

MR. KARABAR: My name is Alan Karabar. I live at 2510 Calper.

First I want to comment on the RD-2 zoning. I
take issue with RD-2 zoning on Ridge, Hinman, and Lake. I think that the RD-2 as described by the plan allows for six to 10 stories. That seems a bit high and uncharacteristic for these areas. Currently they're not even zoned downtown. The R-5 and R-6 originally allow five to eight stories. This height seems to be enough. RD-2 may also lead to losing the historic character on the downtown border, such as Ridge, by inserting very large structures only on one side, the east side in this case. Additionally the RD-2 allows for ground retail, which includes restaurants and bars. I don't think we really want an Outback Steakhouse or a Burger King on Ridge.

In regards to Lake Street, the RD-2 zoning has a potential of 10 stories, which is right across the street from single-family homes. I don't think this is fair to the homeowners.

With this criticism I do bring recommendations. I think that we can bring the RD-2 up to the alley between Ridge and Oak and up to the alley between Hinman and Chicago. This would eliminate the different size street walls and preserve the character
of these streets that border the downtown.

In regard to the downtown transitional zoning, the master plan says, "DT should be converted where feasible through adaptive reuse. And there's a desire to maintain B retail and office space."

I believe that Davis Street west of the Metra is the epitome of B retail and office space. And if you zone it for three to five stories, you're creating too much of an incentive to tear it down and be replaced by A retail office or residential. My recommendation here would be to keep the height capped at three stories.

My last comment would be on public benefit bonuses in general. I completely agree with the intent of public benefit bonuses, which is to create an objective standard for granting bonus floor area and building height. However, I think that the values listed on the table, 5.3, in the master plan are inconsistent with the goals described by the plan.

Most importantly I think that these standards are listed, are too easy to obtain. These bonuses should be made very difficult to receive by today's standards so that the plan can stand in place for years to come and the heights reached by the maximum public

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benefit bonuses does not become the norm for every building. Thank you.

MS. LINDWALL: Hi. I'm Jean Lindwall, 625 Library Place. I've got a, just a range of comments and then also a few questions.

First of all, especially with respect to the north traditional and the, kind of south traditional areas that are east of the track, there are already several four and five-story buildings that are pretty common in this area. And while I certainly like the notion of three-story buildings, it seems to me that given the width of Sherman, and Orrington especially, you know, the four and five-story buildings that are there seem to work pretty well, in part because of the wide sidewalks and then partly through the effective use of the awnings that help to kind of bring the pedestrian height down.

So you know, I'm wondering kind of why we're looking at just three-story buildings there. It seems to me that a little, you know, in certain sites, little bit taller buildings would work well and mirror what's there already.

One of the overall comments I've got is that

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the form-based code recommendations with the, you know, the setbacks and stuff, they really don't match the character of our, the buildings that we have. I've been looking around, looking for, you know, where we have that kind of stepback. And the only real example that I've come up with is Optima Views, which I know many in the community are not particularly fond of as a building type.

So I think before we go too far down the road of the form-based code recommendations, that we really ought to be looking and thinking about what the buildings that would be built under these stepbacks are going to look like. I mean, you know, you can, there's the flexibility to mass things so you can build, you know, taller in one part of the building and not, and you know, and have it step back in other areas. So there's certainly flexibility for the architect. But I think that, you know, before we totally change the character, the design character of our downtown, we ought to think carefully about what we're doing.

Also with respect to the way that north traditional boundary is drawn both on the master plan and the zoning district map, you cut the Evanston...
Galleria building in two, which you know, having seen zoning maps where buildings are cut in half and you know, are part in one district and part in another, I don't think that's a, you know, a very good precedent. And I hope that that at some point will get changed.

With respect to the proposed DT districts, I think that since the intent is really to encourage pedestrian streets and retail activity on these streets, I really don't understand why you're not requiring the minimum 75 percent store front windows and glass on all frontages instead of just either one out of two or two out of three depending on where the building is.

Also just in clarifying the definitions in, for the ground floor uses, the use list includes service uses, not real defined. And then in the upper story it reverts to personal services. So I'm not quite sure what the difference is. I'm sure that that can be clarified as you go along. So I don't think we need to stop and answer that question here.

One of the bigger problems I have is with the proposed university link, which doesn't seem to make very much sense, at least to me, as it's drawn. You know, I understand, obviously there's a strong
relationship between the university to the campus to the north in the downtown. But I think that if you're going to draw that link you either need to include the 1800 Sherman building that the university owns and intends to use as its, you know, for office purposes, or you know, and neither is the NU apartment building that's across the street from the Orrington Hotel.

And it seems to me if you're trying to, you know, create this sense of university, I'm not sure that drawing the boundaries, you know, and trying to create this physical space really makes much sense. When the Elgin Road was built and the Rebecca Crown were built, really what happened was a real distinct edge was created. And while it's close to the downtown and it's certainly an easy walk, it really wasn't, you know, it's, they're not, they're two different places.

And putting the building at the corner of Sherman and Clark in this university link district really doesn't seem to make much sense. Because that's one of the strongest, most distinctive buildings and what people think of when they're looking at the Sherman Avenue retail, you know, where the Hughes drugstore used to be. That again, it's a four-story building.
As for, you know, I didn't talk much when we were talking about the circulation. But there's been mentioned in the plan in several places about how changing the crossing patterns and circulation patterns on Clark Street would help make the crossings safer. I think about 10, 15 years ago when the Oldberg Park was redone and there was a barrier, kind of a berm put on the median between, that runs down the center of Elgin Avenue. And as part of that, and you used to be able to just kind of cross anywhere on that whole block. And it really, and people did.

And what was done is a fence was installed along the Clark Street sidewalk. And this berm was put up across Elgin Road, that runs down the middle of Elgin Road. And then eventually the students, you know, picked their path. And that was, a mid-block crossing was created, which really has worked real, real well.

And I live in the neighborhood north of the university. So my path to downtown and back again is to walk through the campus. And that's a pretty securitous route. And depending on where I'm going, I either use the mid-block crossing or the, walk down Rebecca Crown and cross there.
So the notion that somehow the, we have to fix that street, I think, is you know, maybe not as, you know, as necessary. And I see students using the -- all the time to eat their sandwiches and lounge. So I'm not sure that that space is necessarily, you know, a bad, you know, badly organized as is.

As for the north edge district, neither of the buildings on Emerson that have been approved or under construction, contrary to what was included in the text of the report, we've already seen one extension for the 1881 Oak project. And you know, I think that as you're deciding on what heights are appropriate for that location, you really ought to be thinking about what the appropriate height would be if neither one of them are built. You know, before 1881 Oak was considered by the Plan Commission, the recommendation of the Commission was that you ought to be looking at an eight to 10-story building.

With respect to the east edge, I have a question about, you know, the Best Western is in the proposed RD-2 transition building with a six to 10-story height limit. And I know there's been considerable discussion both in the Charrette and in the plan itself
that this is a potential development site. And I guess
the question there is, what are the economics of tearing
down the Best Western to put something else in its
place?

Finally, with respect to the RD districts, you
know, generally, I have the same comment as the
gentleman before me in that, you know, and the question
is, why aren't we, you know, just leaving the R-5 and
R-6 districts in place where, you know, where we're not
looking to encourage some sort of really truly mixed
use? Because as drafted at the moment, the RD district
allows retail sales, service, and entertainment uses.
And the question is, do we really want these along
Hinman or at Oak and Grove?

And then just, you know, just kind of a real
question. If you look at some of the setback
requirements, under 2.3.3 where it's talking about kind
of the front orientation, it's talking about having
apartment buildings that have to have a stoop or a porch
design. And you know, the question is, in a modern
residential building in our downtown, are we, you know,
do we really need to be looking at the kind of entries
that we might see either on older courtyard buildings or
on town houses? I think I'll stop there.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Next.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: Jean, I, I take it that you're satisfied with the way Oldberg Park is presently configured?

MS. LINDWALL: I kind of like it. I like walking through it. And I love the -- circle. Yeah, I think that the notion of the closing off Clark Street is an intriguing one. But I'm not sure that it's, you know, that's one, you know, I'm not sure that it's necessary. But, you know.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: And I take it as well that you would include the bagel shop there on the corner of Clark and Sherman in the traditional, you would move it into the traditional area instead of the --

MS. LINDWALL: Well, I also include all of the Galleria buildings, the old Marshall Fields building and the traditional, and not cut it in half.

Frankly, I'd put that whole, the whole block that the Marshall Fields building is on, as a traditional block. We've got the health club, it's four stories already. I mean, it's got a, kind of a nice
scale to it. And I'm not sure that you want to be encouraging -- the core buildings, like what, 15 or 30 stories, whatever's allowed in the Core districts, on that block. That would tend to overshadow. Because -- of that whole block is a traditional block.

And I probably, if I had my druthers, I'd put the whole Marshall Fields or the whole Orrington Hotel block and sub-zone the traditional zone as well.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: Now, when we had all our Committee meetings, you attended almost all of those.

MS. LINDWALL: Yes.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: This is the first time that I've heard your comments with respect to the Oldberg Park, for example, and the north end of Sherman and Clark, if memory serves.

MS. LINDWALL: I wrote, you know, in terms of Oldberg Park, that wasn't really part of the plan. But if you would recall, if you were at the meeting in January, I wrote a whole --

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: I never missed a meeting.

MS. LINDWALL: Oh, okay. Well, I had given
you and distributed to the Plan Commission kind of a whole discussion about what I viewed as the traditional versus the, the other.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: Okay.

MS. LINDWALL: So I mean, my comments have been out there. I forgot one thing. Is that okay? One thing with respect to the eastern edge district, or again, or I guess actually I can deal with it with the core. But it really has to do with why the Woman's Club and the library are not part of an Edge district instead of being included as a Core district. But we can discuss that when you get to the core, I guess.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: Thank you. Whose glasses are these?

MS. LINDWALL: Oh, that's mine.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: It didn't look like yours.

MS. LINDWALL: Printed big.

MR. MARLIT: I was amazed by the woman just a few people ago who didn't realize that this was trying to do away with some of the planned debates that we've had over the last couple of years. And then I realized
that I am too very confused.

    What is going to happen after this? This is a
discussion about this as a master plan and will be
followed up with discussions to solidify the zoning, is
that correct?

    CHAIRMAN WOODS: Correct.

    MR. MARLIT: Do we have a time frame for that
zoning discussion?

    CHAIRMAN WOODS: Dennis? Obviously we will
not start any deliberation on zoning until after a
master plan is approved, which --

    MR. MARLIT: I've heard some references to
kind of next year some time. And I don't know if that's
January or June or for what the time frame really is.

    MR. MARINO: I think next year is certainly
accurate. I think where we are now obviously is the
Plan Commission making, going through the public hearing
process, public discussion. And then at some point
we'll be making a recommendation to the Planning and
Development Committee. That Planning and Development
Committee will then at some point make a recommendation
to City Council regarding the master plan that's in
front of you now.
After the City Council takes action as it relates to the master plan, then that will then trigger direction in terms of zoning recommendations to be considered by the Zoning Committee of the Plan Commission. And that is a very legalistic process with a great deal of notice and so on. So that does take a considerable amount of time.

But that certainly would occur in 2008. I can't be exact as to when that would occur. But certainly that would be the process.

MR. MARLIT: So with that knowledge, then, to me it's kind of pointless to talk about building height and all that kind of stuff right now. Whether they modify the master plan as it moves forward as a result of these discussions or not, we're going to talk about it all again later when we get into the zoning aspects of it.

So either we can be polite and know that we're going to do all that talking later and save all of the nitpicking on heights and that kind of thing and save it for later because we're going to go through it later. Or maybe we'd enjoy the debate. I don't know.

Since this was the first presentation of the
real zoning areas, as everybody else has a few general comments, one is, and actually related to the edge and traditional areas, an idea that I had with the public benefit bonuses was perhaps to customize them depending on the specific zone.

So perhaps in the edge zones where it's a budding residential single-family houses, as somebody pointed out, maybe those public benefit bonuses need to be much more strict or of a different nature. Maybe the base height is much lower. And the public benefits bonuses to get the additional height really are very difficult to get or really do contribute something to that residential area.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Can I interrupt for just one moment? Can you state your name and address:

MR. MARLIT: Oop, sorry. I've done it so many times I forgot. Sorry.

Travis Marlit, downtown retail owner. I'll skip the commercial this time. Also a resident of 1122 Maple Avenue. And all that I said is still under oath.

So anyway, you know, some creative thinking about those public benefits based on the zone itself and maybe even where in the zone, you know, the closer you
are to the residential houses. Maybe those benefits, public benefits, are tailored in some way. And I realize that that could be getting very complex. But just an idea.

The other thing that I haven't seen is how the list of public benefits, whether it's a single list or a customized list or whatever, how that's maintained. I would presume that the Zoning Ordinance itself would have to stipulate how that list is maintained. And presumably that would be through City Council action in the future. But I haven't seen any reference to how that list would be maintained or even if the list that's in the master plan now is the least bit accurate or desirable or anything else. But I'm sure we'll get into that as we get into the zoning discussions. Related to that presentation, that's all I have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Thanks. Next.

MR. HOUSTON: Hello. My name is Brent Houston. I live at 1114 Florence Avenue. And I work at the Alley Gallery in Evanston. And the Alley Gallery is located between Benson and Sherman. It's a little alley. It's where, on Sherman our address is Sherman. But in the rear.
So we talked earlier about one-of-a-kind businesses. And I believe that Bookmans Alley, which is next to us and us and are exactly that, one of a kind.

And basically I'm curious what impact these, this design might have on these two businesses, Alley Gallery and Bookmans Alley. And if you don't know that, when is the meeting for that discussion? So, and that's all.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Do you want to answer that one since it's a pretty straightforward answer?

MR. SMITH: I think as Linda had said earlier, that the one-of-a-kind businesses, the independent mom and pop shops, entrepreneurs, we need that, we want that. We want the good ones to survive and thrive. So if someone's not paying attention to their store, leaving things dusty, not really good with the customers, okay, maybe they need to upgrade. But most of the stores here are great.

So the idea was that improving the alley, the Bookmans Alley, get the paving in there, the lighting. Maybe some artwork on the walls would help draw folks back to you. And maybe even liven the wall of that building up by getting some glass store fronts further
down. So when we find things like that you want to
enhance them. And so that's what we're trying, trying
to do.

MR. HOUSTON: Okay. One thing. I heard that
maybe parking, or you know, like turning that alleyway
into just a walkway rather than a place to go in and
park where we have a little parking lot there. And that
would impact us. Because parking, as you know, in
downtown Evanston is really tough.

MR. SMITH: Good, good question. Because it's
hard to tell from the drawing. But the idea is, because
that is a usable alley for vehicles and deliveries, is
that it would be treated with pavers and art and
whatnot, but not close to vehicles. Because it would be
like a European alley where trucks go in the morning.
And then pedestrians feel comfortable walking down
there. Because we've got to get parking back by you
plus, you know, garbage trucks and deliveries. So,
great question, though.

MR. HOUSTON: Thank you. Thank you.

MR. SMITH: In fact I think one of the earlier
sketches, there was a little bollard in there. We took
that out just so people didn't get confused. Thank you.
CHAIRMAN WOODS:  Thank you.  Kirk, I guess we are ready to move on.

MR. BISHOP:  If we could take just one minute before we move on.

CHAIRMAN WOODS:  Yes, absolutely.

MR. BISHOP:  I'd like to kind of provide a sense of the rationale.  We've heard some very constructive comments tonight, as we did last week.  And I assure you, we're writing them down and going into the thought process to see how we can refine and improve this plan.

A couple of the things we heard tonight I'd just like to take up to provide either a rationale or an explanation of how we move forward with them.  There's been a suggestion tonight, and we've heard it before, that a movement toward regulating by stories as opposed to feet is confusing to people.  It's making them do an apples to oranges comparison.  Suggestion that it's obfuscation.

That really wasn't our intent.  Our intent was well meaning, but perhaps we should set it aside, is that it provides greater design flexibility for different architectural designs.  Different functional
uses of buildings demand different floor to ceiling
heights.

But there would be no problem with translating
the recommendations in this plan to a feet-based
strategy. And you'll get no resistance to us from that.
I just wanted to make clear that our intention was
pure, though perhaps the wrong place, the wrong time.
The lack of a public hearing, I want to take
that up. Because that seems like maybe there was some
evil intent.

If we remember back to the round table
discussions that we had on the four-story of this
building, at least one night and then out in various
community locations on subsequent evenings, one of the
strongest themes that came through in those discussions
was that people were frustrated in downtown Evanston, no
matter their stakeholder interest.

With the lack of certainty and predictability
that has resulted in past years from the existing zoning
system that establishes for all intents and purposes
some rules in a book that are fairly easy to modify
through a planned development process, that adds
uncertainty to the process. That has, we heard at least
this summer, and we hear it in nearly every community
that we go to, that has frustrated people. They'd like
to know with some certainly what can happen on the
property that they perhaps own or the property that they
live across the street from with some sense of
certainly, know going in.

And so our recommendations to move to more of
an objective system of clear rules and expectations that
is whatever they are, whether they're in this form or
some modified form, would be in moving in the right
direction for everyone. It's not to close the public
out of a hearing process and a participatory process.
Indeed that's the process we're involved in right now.

Our thinking is, let's have that debate now.
Let's approach it rationally. Let's come up with the
rules that we think provide for certainty and
predictability and give that a chance for a while and
see if we like that system better.

So, and there would still be for unusual cases
projects that maybe slip the track and have a better
mousetrap. There could still be, under a zoning
strategy, opportunities for public hearing and
involvement. There could be a transparent process for
review of new projects against these objective
standards. It just, it just could be, and probably
should be, a different process than we used for planned
developments today.

So that's the, that's the thinking behind this
sort of as of right. Then, plus bonuses against an
objective menu-type of approach.

The cutting the Galleria building in half,
depending on which of my compatriots we talk to, was
either inadvertent or because of the slightly different
profile of the building east to west, things easy to
address. Give us some direction and I assure you that
we'll be responsive.

The university link, you know, that's the edge
versus the link. The linkage more in keeping with a
sort of non-edge, is a fairly debatable proposition.
We've made a recommendation out of the charrette and we
stand by it. But we'll certainly, obviously take
direction.

The east, the edge districts, the idea of
keeping them in existing residential classifications is
a possibility. It isn't consistent with the baton as it
was handed to us from the work of the Downtown Plan

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Committee of the Plan Commission, but is certainly something that's, you know, on the table.

The idea of using alleys as the outer boundary as opposed to streets makes some sense, frankly, particularly on the Ridge, on the Ridge side, the eastern side, and I think is an idea that we should, you know, debate and talk about.

Alleys often make better zoning boundaries than do streets because of the back to back relationships of buildings. I'd have to be reminded before going much further with that thought of any approvals that have occurred along the, I'm sorry, the Hinman side, the eastern boundary, before I got much further into that. But just to say in the abstract, alleys can make fine zoning boundaries. And so that's an idea worthy of consideration.

The public benefit bonus system is to some extent, in the conceptual strategy that's presented here, tied to geography. It can clearly be more refined and tied to geography. I think that's an excellent suggestion. We've tried to set the groundwork for such a system. And we look forward to hearing more constructive comments like that. Thank you.
MR. SMITH: And Mr. Chair, if I could just clarify a couple more things. I mean, on the university link idea, I think Jean got confused that we were saying that the university would expand south into downtown. Let's clarify that. The university boundary is the university boundary. What we're trying to do is make a better port of entry, a better gateway for people coming from Northwestern into downtown and from downtown to Northwestern.

Kevin and I drove down Clark Street to Elgin Road today and four different pedestrians popped out in the dark over the -- without crossing at either the mid-block or the main entrance, you know, at the point of entry. So we envision that some day as the university infills and upgrades and changes their buildings, they would frame maybe a little bit more of the downtown edge.

It's just, what is that port of entry? And can we make it much better and not have streets cutting through there? Can we make it a grander plaza? We want people to sit there. But the -- aren't working. And the scale of that plaza isn't working. So that was our recommendation. It's not to expand the university into...
the downtown.

    The second thing was the Best Western. When
we looked at it professionally, neutrally, objectively
coming into downtown, Best Western is a great
corporation. But that is a very dated property. It
doesn't work on many fronts. We heard very strong and
clear from many people in the community it's ugly. The
street wall is broken up. There's no shops on that
side. It's a one-sided street. It's not a two-sided
shopping street. It's not a great port of entry from
the south. The parking deck is way outdated. And many
cars don't really fit in there. It's dark and drippy,
etcetera, etcetera.

    So we recommended a redevelopment. The good
news is, that block is very big. We think that is one
of the biggest, primest spots for redevelopment. You're
not squeezing into a little space. We think that that
would be an excellent way to work with Best Western to
find them a much better spot, a much better building,
and development that to finish off the downtown on the
south.

    And the other thing I just would like to add
with what Kirk was saying, back to the comment about
just giving free reign to staff and/or the Plan Commission on this, the trend that has happened over the years until recently is that plain Jane vanilla zoning isn't working. That somebody may meet the letter of the law, staff signs off on it, the Plan Commission has to sign off on it, but then what comes out of the wash is not what we as a community want.

It's ugly. It's not massed right. There's no glass in the store fronts. There's no store front orientation to the street. The architecture's run amok.

We as planners and designers have seen a trend towards design guidelines so that there's a set of guidelines, a tool that everybody can use, both staff and Commissioners and Councils. That has evolved to design standards. So they're required. Your staff and your Council and you have put those together in some cases.

Now what's happened is the form-based code means it's not plain Jane zoning anymore, that you have these standards imbedded in the zoning and you have to really go through a gauntlet of steps in order to come out with a good development at the other end. It's predictable, as Kirk said. It's clean. It's clear. It
solves a lot of the controversy and the angst and trench warfare that you go through site by site.

Because a developer's going to have to come in and say, if you as of right are going to get this height, we want articulated buildings, we want top-notch architecture, we want flexibility in doing things, not just fill the box up. We want great store fronts, great architecture. So it's the opposite of what I think some folks are thinking, that it's just, you know, let staff do what they want. It actually helps arm the staff and you and the Council with really good standards.

So with that, we'd like to shift into the next part of the --

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Can I clarify one thing?

Jean?

MS. LINDWALL: Yes.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: On the Best Western site, is your concern that the six to 10-story, six base, 10 max for the RD-2 for that district isn't tall enough to contribute to the idea that somebody might redevelop it or --

MS. LINDWALL: I think my question is, the economics of a development, you know, how much
development do you have to allow on that site in order
to make it work? I agree that that's a site that ought
to be developed. But you know, so the question is, what
would be required? You know, can we do it with the
proposed RD zoning? Or is that going to end up being
some sort of a special case somewhere down the line?

And I do understand the difference between the
university edge and the downtown and understand the
difference in zoning quite well.

MR. SMITH: I think what we're trying to do is
also get predictability through the plan so that it's
not caught up later in zoning when we discuss heights
three months from now. We don't hope a special case
comes or another PUD or PD comes to the table.

You want to set the predictability now with
your plan as policy and guide. Then the zoning will be
detailed out in the coming months exactly like you did
with Central Street. Got a plan, got a direction, got a
vision, got a focus. And then the zoning takes off from
there and fills in the detail. And staff has been doing
a great job of getting that detail.

Shall we move on?

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Let's move on to the next.
MR. SMITH: For the sake of time I'm going to keep it very brief. We have had several, if not, five or six different presentations of the plan to various groups. I just want to clarify what we're doing again.

We're in what we call the Core area of downtown. And we've got four, five little pieces of the core. On the western edge of the tracks from the transition of Ridge, the Ridge Avenue corridor, to then the western flank of the tracks, we've got the two, and I'm going to try and do it with this, there we go, the E here, which we call the West Core.

The scale of buildings there, the tracks being there, a very short walk to the train station, we felt that that would be a 15 to 18 zone for height. Now when you really look at some of those earlier drawings where we had opportunity sites, there's really not that much development opportunity in either of these cores.

So again, to reiterate for some of the folks coming new to this process, this does not mean that you've scraped that whole zone and it all goes to that height. It's just when some building turns over and/or a site, that then we would have that height as the
recommended height. We feel it's against the tracks. It's buffered by the transition and edge zones. It's got great access to the train. That's why we went with the western core.

The east core is very similar: denser building; very large library; you've got transition from even denser residential to the east than through Hinman and Chicago. And the idea would be then, the east core would be 15 to 18 stories.

Now the gentleman that was up a little earlier was asking about how much you'll really give as far as bonuses. You can see that we have a very tight spread. It's 15 to 18, as we feel that that's the approach that should be taken. If some things are done they can go 16, 17, and 18. But in the core core where there is more room for better bonusing and more activity, we think there's a bigger spread. So, and I'll get to that in a minute.

So the west core zones on your main streets next to the tracks, and then on the east adjacent to Fountain Square block where the big library and other big buildings are and the big, old former bank building, we said 15 to 18. Fifteen as of right with tons of
restrictions on it, lots of design standards, lots of
design guidelines and control, and then three stories
extra if you can use the bonus system with the formulas
that have been laid out in the study as a strategy at
this moment.

We then move into the main core, the bigger
triangle. And we see this as the core of your downtown.
Your downtown has changed. It's not a low-rise
traditional downtown anymore. Some folks said it never
really was because we had big department stores and it
wasn't a little main street, it wasn't Mayberry, that it
was urban from way back. Maybe the heights weren't
always there. But there were tall buildings, massive
buildings there in the past.

So we felt with that tradition in the middle
of those types of buildings, the scale of the new things
that have gone on, that have gone through your process,
the heights there, the tracks, the buffers, the edges,
the treatments, not having a lot of residential,
residential pure neighborhood zones around it, that that
core should be defined as the core with a base height
of, or I'm sorry, 15 stories up to 30. The highest
building in that core is 28 today, the Optima across
from the theater.

So the idea here is that instead of trying to negotiate and go through the trench warfare core, I mean, block by block, let's set the base, let's set the height. But you can see that the spread is much different now, 15 to 30 stories. To go 15 more stories there's that whole menu again of bonuses that you have to really abide by. And you've got to be pretty creative to get there.

That core is your active downtown action area. It's within the central part of that quarter-mile walking distance that we have around the train stations, which most of your downtown is in. It's got all the smart growth principles. That's why we're recommending that core be at that height. Walkable to the train stations, two train stations. Mixed use. Full range of retail, including a grocery store. Very accessible street grid system. Maybe some day change to one way depending on future studies of that. A lot of retail activity and lots of parking. When we saw how strategically located your parking decks were and then it's also your entertainment district, we felt this was an area that could handle the height that in most cases
you've already approved.

We then look again at the core. There's only one site over here at the university's parking lot that may some day be a development site. The university may have that for many years as a parking lot. They may do something on there. But whether they do it or they sell it or somebody develops it, then we would have that height set. We're not hoping to make it up down the pipe and have to try and figure it out later.

So out of that whole core there's not that many opportunity sites we see. This just sets the zoning for once and for all. And many years down the pipe if the building becomes deteriorated or changes, that's what they would follow.

Last but not least would be the triangle in the middle, the Fountain Square block. We feel that that's distinguished different from the main core. We think that it's a small block. There's not a lot of bulk on that block. We think it is something that you can do with a signature building, whether the developer that you're reviewing now does it or some other developer in the future, that that block has some potential to provide some amenities for the surrounding...
area whether it's the open space at Fountain Square or some other open spaces in the downtown.

    We took the highest building in the downtown, the 28 stories of the Optima across from the theater. We then did a 50 percent bonus on that. And that's how we got to the 42 stories. So if you look at the range, we went from 25 to 42. That's even more than 15 stories. For you to get to 42, you'd have to really go down that list of bonuses and really produce a lot of benefits for going there.

    Now there is some argument too that if you looked at that whole wedge of cheese, and think of it as a big block of cheese or a big building, that on its side would be a very bulky building for that core. But something taller and slimmer we think would be better with a lot of stepbacks.

    As you saw in Kirk's presentation last time, there was a lot of restrictions in there about how its stepped back and set back and what floors are there. If parking's in the base, as most of the new buildings are, it would be screened and the architecture would be treated all the way around.

    So we had the two options there. We need
guidance from you on all of these districts on height. But also we had the Fountain Square building in and the Fountain Square building out. That's two options that are still in the plan. We would need guidance or you could pass a recommendation to the Council on keeping the two options on the table.

But to reiterate, we think that's the one spot in downtown that could have a tall, slim, iconic tower that would be very visible, lit up at night. Whoever the architect is, it would have to be something really super. It would be something that would be seen on certain view corridors, but not way out in the neighborhoods.

We think it's very accessible, could charge up this retail core. You've got new retail on Sherman with some nice high glass store fronts. And then it falls apart around the block, especially to the east where the bank is and the big ramp. We recommended that in the earlier discussions getting the ramp out of there and creating a real new streetscape on the east side of Orrington and possibly doing a lot better with our public plazas and spaces to the south.

So that's what we've had on the table. From
our professional opinion, from listening to folks, and
again for the process folks, we've heard from everything
from don't touch anything downtown, we don't want any
change, we don't want any new development, to this is
our economic development engine, every block should be a
high-rise. So we as professionals have to make our best
recommendation.

We've met countless hours with staff, with
Commissioners, with the public, and got a lot of input.
And we're recommending, because you match many of the
smart growth principles that communities are striving
for around the country, that you can handle height, but
in a very restricted way in the core, not necessarily on
the edges.

And again, many, many cities would love to
have those ingredients that you have. And that's where
we are with the presentation.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Okay. Show of hands for
those people who are going to want to speak on this
subject. Okay, and again, we'll do the same sort of
thing. So if you want to sort of get up when you feel
ready to get up and get in line. And we'll just start
at the beginning.
COMMISSIONER BURRUS: Do you want remarks now?

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Why don't we do it later.

MS. GREGORY: Irene Gregory, Sherman and Emerson.

This has nothing to do with the downtown area or the buildings. But you know, I take my newspaper and bottles and you know, my recycling over on Oakton Street. And here's this big barn of a building. And this is not my idea. And I'm sure it's not new. But it seems it would lend itself to a sports building with a bowling alley and all sorts of things for young people that we don't have in the City today. And I don't know if you've given it any thought. But perhaps you could put it on your list.

MR. SMITH: Could we just start by, where was that location again, ma'am, that you suggested?

MS. GREGORY: It's on Oakton across from Home Depot.

MR. SMITH: Okay.

PARTICIPANT: I think it's already been approved.

MS. GREGORY: Approved for what?

PARTICIPANT: I think -- has it. That one
for, never mind. -- You're right. You're right.

MS. RAKLEY: Good evening. My name is Barbara Rakley, R-a-k-l-e-y. And I live on Grant Street in Evanston.

About 350 members of the public participated in three community workshops which a consultant team held in June and July. At these workshops participants were asked to comment on four questions. The first three questions were about the strengths and weaknesses of downtown. The fourth question specifically asked for input about the idea of dividing downtown into three subareas. The fourth question stated, what about the proposed subareas, traditional, sorry, transitional, traditional, and downtown core? Is this the right way to think about downtown's varied form?

The responses of the 350 people who participated in these workshops in June and July are captured in a series of spreadsheets which are on the City's website. These. And the fourth spreadsheet, the one that I've given to the Commissioners, captures the public's responses to the question about the proposed subareas.

What the spreadsheet reveals, as you can see,
is that about two or three of the comments express a favorable view of the subareas. As far as I could see, and please correct me if I'm mistaken, there are no comments at all in favor of the downtown Core district. Representative comments are as follows: "The core area is too large. Make the core area smaller. Expand the traditional areas. Leave Fountain Square as traditional. Make Fountain Square a traditional area. Marshall Field, Carlson Building, Orrington Hotel should be traditional. Forty stories is not traditional. Do not agree with designations. Not enough traditional to east. Traditional districts, shouldn't there be more areas? Fountain Square should be traditional. Fountain Square and Marshall Fields should be traditional. Traditional areas are too small. Not enough traditional areas. Add more and expand the traditional areas. Increase traditional areas." And then there's one that I think says it all: "The core is swallowing the apple."

So I'm reading the comments captured on the spreadsheet and of course I'm wondering why did the consultants go ahead with establishing this very, very large Core district in the draft downtown plan when there was really absolutely no support for a core zone
such as this in the public input. The comments, as you can see, in front of you express a uniform desire that the traditional, the smaller, the shorter subareas be expanded. But of course what we're presented with is a very large core area. So the only conclusion I can reach is that it wasn't the residents of Evanston who came out and participated in the workshops in June and July that were driving this decision.

So since I didn't find any support for the downtown core subarea or the 15 to 30-story buildings that it would permit, I decided to look at the other three spreadsheets which are very much longer, and I will put them in the record, I did not make copies for all of you, to see if there was support for tall buildings in a large Core district in any of the comments captured in the other three spreadsheets.

There's 27 pages of additional spreadsheets. And each of the 27 pages has about 40 rows on it. So there are about a thousand or 1,100 comments captured on those spreadsheets, which will be in the record. And those comments were the ones given to the consultant team in June and July.

I can't say that I looked, that I read every
single one of the thousand comments on those four spreadsheets, but certainly the idea that I got was that there really was, again, no support for the concept of re-zoning downtown to allow lots and lots and lots of tall buildings. And since all the spreadsheets will be in the record, the Commissioner will certainly have a chance to look at them.

So once again I'm wondering where did this idea to re-zone downtown to allow lots and lots and lots of tall buildings come from. So the next document I looked at was entitled, the Downtown Evanston Charrette Summary, which is also posted on the City's website.

And one of the things that I liked about the downtown Evanston Charrette Summary is that it actually set out the comments of the seven focus groups that the consultants held as part of the week long Charrette at the end of July. And these focus groups, just for informational purposes, consisted of downtown residents, design professionals, design, sorry, downtown developers, youth, commercial property owners, downtown commercial tenants, and young professionals.

For obvious reasons I was most interested in the focus group held with downtown developers. And this
focus group included 10, yes, it included 10 builders, developers, and their consultants. And what I really expected to find in the comments given by these 10 developers is that the developers wanted more tall buildings downtown. That is what I was expecting to find in this document, which will also be in the record. But if that was in fact their input, it was not captured in the document. According to the document, what the 10 developers who, if you will, spoke on the record, said was that they wanted, understandably, a more streamlined development approval process, less aggressive enforcement of downtown parking regulations, which I'm sure all of us want, more national chains downtown, less public participation in the process, zoning relief, and better architecture and design.

So to my mind, after looking at these documents, the $64,000 question is, if the public doesn't want tall buildings and the 10 developers who participated in the focus group didn't say anything about wanting tall buildings, how did we end up with this plan with this very large core area which allows for lots and lots and lots of tall buildings?
So the next document I looked at was this colorful document. The Commissioners have it in black and white. And it's entitled, Where We've Been, Where We're Going. And on this schedule, it's a project schedule, the months of June and July are devoted to community workshops. And those are the workshops in which the 350 citizens participated. And of course those occurred. And at the end of July we see the design Charrette, the week long design Charrette, which did also of course occur. And then the month of August, according to the project's schedule, is devoted to plan preparations and something called form-based code pilot areas.

Now here's the mysterious part. According to the project schedule, the entire month of September was scheduled for community workshops on the preliminary plan. And of course we all know that these community workshops never in fact happened. And I am not the first or the only one who noticed that these community workshops never happened, and in fact, wonder why they never happened.

This draft plan for downtown Evanston was first presented publicly on October 24th at a joint
presentation to the aldermen, the Plan Commission and
the Plan Commissioners, and the members of the Economic
Develop Committee. Towards the end of the presentation
Commissioner Schuldenfrei asked, and I'm quoting from
page 81 of the transcript of that meeting, "I'm just
wondering about the community workshops that were
scheduled for the full month of September."

Mr. Bishop responded on page 83 of the
transcript, "What was really decided very early in the
process is we really needed to front load opportunities
for public involvement and participation." And when
Commissioner Schuldnefrei was asked if this response had
answered here question, she replied that in fact it had
not. Because Mr. Bishop completely begged the question
about what had happened to the September community
workshops.

So this is my key point and it is the logical
follow up to the one asked by the Commissioner on
October 24th. What is the point of front loading the
process with opportunities for citizen comment if there
is no follow-up opportunity for citizens to come back,
look at a draft document, and say, yes, what's in the
draft matches the input I gave early on in the process
or no, what's in the draft completely misses the mark
and does not accurately represent the input I gave in
June and July?

So Alderman Wynn obviously picked up on this
point when she stated a bit later in the October 24th
meeting, and this is quoting from page 88 of the
transcript, Alderman Wynn: "If you look at the Lake
Front master planning, that was front loaded as well.
And my point is, you can get all these people to
participate, but if what they see in the final product
isn't what they were talking about, then it doesn't
matter that you front loaded it."

And I'm sure we could all speculate as to why
the September workshops, which were supposed to occur in
the downtown planning process, did not in fact occur.
Because if the hundreds of residents who gave their
input to the consulting team in June and July were given
the chance to look at the draft plan before it went to
this Commission, it's really a no-brained what they
would have said: that the recommendation for the
downtown Core areas does not in any way match the input
they gave to the consultant team in June and July.

And you don't have to take my word for it.
All you have to do is look at the 1,000 or so comments captured in the spreadsheets posted on the City Website. And it will take about 20 minutes to figure out that there's actually no match between what's in the draft plan with respect to the Core areas and what the public said it wanted in its downtown.

The slogan the consultants established for the downtown planning process was, It's Everyone's Downtown. But a recommendation for a giant core area with buildings between 15 and 30 stories tall, as well as a Central Core area with a skyscraper between 25 and 42 stories tall, reveals that this document is not in fact a plan for everyone's downtown. It may be a plan for the consultants' downtown. It may be a plan for staff's downtown. It may even be a plan for the City Manager's downtown. But the one thing that it isn't is a plan for everyone's downtown.

So the draft plan needs to go back to the community before it goes on to Council. This plan needs to follow a similar process to the one used in the Lakeshore planning process. In the Lakeshore planning process the consultant team held seven community meetings after the team came up with an initial draft of
the plan. But in the downtown planning process, the consultant team held no community workshops after it issued the draft plan. And I'm sure a lot of us are wondering why the downtown plan is being rushed at top speed through the review process when there has been a very inadequate opportunity, actually no opportunity, for the community to work with the draft plan in workshop format.

I'm sure someone will raise the point that this hearing before the Commission is an opportunity for public input on the draft plan. But giving comments to the Commission in a formal hearing is a far different thing from working on a draft plan in a workshop format. Obviously there's a huge difference between what happens in a community workshop and what happens in a formal hearing such as this one.

So I'm going to conclude my remarks by asking the Commission to send the draft plan back to the consultant team with a very clear instruction that the consultant team presented to the community in workshop format so the community can tell the consultants yes, you got it right, this is what we want in our downtown, or no, you got it wrong, you didn't hear us, we need to
work on the draft quite a bit more before it goes to the
next step in the approval process.

Or not. Or the Commission can just go with
the game plan, which is to get this plan to Council as
soon as possible. And then the community will have a
new downtown plan, which will in fact represent nobody's
downtown. It's really up to you.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Thank you, Barb. Next.

MS. CAREERIST: I apologize if I'm a little
redundant on some of what Barbara mentioned. But I'll
try to move quickly.

My name is Pat CAREERIST. I'm a downtown
Evanston resident living at 1640 Maple Avenue.

Having participated in many of the community
meetings and focus groups which have been held on the
downtown plan since June, I have several comments to
make in terms of the draft update that has been made
available by the consultants.

Although concerns and needs of those who
participated in various public meeting were well
documented in Section 3 of the draft, the
recommendations made by the consultants did not address
many of the issues raised. The most obvious discrepancy
is with the zoning recommendations that have been made
in terms of building height in particular in the
proposed downtown Core districts.

Few, if any, participants in the community
meetings stated they were in favor of providing
developers an as of right height limit of 15 or 25
stories without providing any public benefits. Yet that
is exactly what is being proposed. And these building
can grow to 30 or 42 stories.

I personally am not interested in having a
downtown filled mostly with high-rises. If I'd wanted
that I wouldn't have invested in downtown Evanston and
moved here from Chicago four and-a-half years ago.

Although the consultants have claimed there
are limited opportunity sites for new development in
downtown Evanston, it's naive to assume that existing
building owners would not jump at the chance to tear
down perfectly good buildings in order to build much
larger buildings. A good example of this happening
today is with Research Park. Built less than 10 years
ago, it is being torn down to make way for a rental
building. And of course the 708 Church building, which
today houses retail and much needed office space, is in
jeopardy of being torn down as well. More incentives should be given to maintain and enhance existing buildings and promote businesses in those buildings rather than tear them down. For new development my recommendation is that zoning in the Core districts should have as of right and maximum height limits far less than what is proposed.

Another problem I have with the draft plan is there is not enough specific recommendations made regarding the need for office, recreational, or entertainment development. Although these have been stated as needs by commercial property owners, tenants, and property managers, youth, and the young professionals in focus groups, the plan seems more focused on new residential development.

What about moving the Civic Center downtown? What other cities don't have their government offices in their downtown where they are more accessible to their residents? What about a performing arts center that could provide our live theater groups and other artists a larger venue with more parking than what you find at the Noise Center that could be used year round and that would draw people not only from inside Evanston, but
outside Evanston. What about providing more affordable
office retail space that could help increase the daytime
population? This could only help the economy in
generating revenue for the City and business for the
many restaurants and shops in the downtown area. If we
had this, perhaps we wouldn't have good places like
Wolfgang Puck's closing down because of high operating
costs.

I don't know the numbers for all of the
existing condo buildings, but my building has 10 percent
of its units for resale, some on the market for almost a
year and 10 percent more that are being rented out.
Some because business, some because owners are unable to
sell.

We also have the Sienna developer in Evanston
requesting a change to two of his proposed buildings to
hotel and rental because he's unable to sell a
sufficient number of new condos to obtain the necessary
financing to continue construction. This does not seem
to reflect a growing demand for new condos.

My last comment concerns the recommendations
for parks and public spaces. I appreciate the creative
ideas proposed by the consultants. I am certainly in
favor of adding more central gathering places for people to enjoy. My concern, however, is that I don't see a viable execution plan included in the draft that would allow for the City to acquire the land where some of these parks and public spaces are proposed.

What is the plan to make these happen? Maybe we could start with some simple fixing and widening of some of the existing sidewalks and adding some benches and landscaping in the meantime to improve the downtown's attractiveness.

Finally, I appreciate the Plan Commission and the Downtown Plan Committee's efforts to include the public in the downtown planning process. I thank the consultants for the time they have spent getting to know Evanston and sharing their expertise.

I hope that the input received at the various meetings is truly taken to heart and acted upon. I believe in the statement that this is everybody's downtown. In my case, though, it is also my neighborhood, and therefore I take this planning process very seriously. Thank you for your time and attention.

MS. SINGH: Good evening. My name is Mary Singh. I live at 1711 Hinman.
And I'd like to thank the consultants. Because across the street from my house they're not going to build any high-rises. However, I walk through the downtown every day, several times a day usually. And I was very interested when this downtown planning started.

Barbara already read to you from this downtown planning topics that we were supposed to discuss when we got into discussion groups. And this tells you the community planning meeting has an agenda. And in it is round table discussions.

So I went to the meeting upstairs in what they call the Parasol Room. And I don't know how many hundred people were there. But there was a great number of people there. And we sat around the table and we talked about these topics and we said what we thought would be best for downtown.

And then someone from each table got up and made a presentation. And I sat through all of the presentations that night. And I wished I could go home because it was getting, you know, people were repeating. Apparently they repeated a lot. Because Barbara has told you that a thousand comments were made. And so I
listened and listened because I was, wanted to make sure that when the plan came up at the end, when we got to the Charrette, the things that were stated at the round table would be present in that plan.

Not one person from all those tables got up and suggested we needed more height in the downtown. Not one person. Now maybe they were shy. Maybe somebody at the table said, we need taller buildings and the person getting up said, I'm not going to say what he said -- the rest of us don't agree. But nobody said it.

And then, through a downpour, maybe some of you remember, I went to the Charrette meeting. There was 42 stories as a possible height in downtown. But nobody who was in the round table meeting said anything about raising the height downtown.

Listen, the reason that the Sherman Plaza is the height it is because the City Council insisted that it be only at least shorter than the bank building. So it's one foot shorter than the bank building. And as far as I'm concerned, the bank building can remain the highest building in Evanston.

And again, thank you for keeping the heights across the street from me low.
CHAIRMAN WOODS: We're going to take a break at around 9:15 or as close to that as we have a reasonable break in speakers. And it'll be a brief break, probably five to 10 minutes, and then return.

MR. SMITH: Jeff Smith of 2724 Harrison.

And I've got basically six, six and-a-half comments about the core aspects of the plan. First, I'd like to emphasize that there is a lot to like in the plan. I think the move toward a form-based code and taking a little more control over how buildings might look is creative and will help to ban further sheer vertical walls in downtown.

The elimination of site development allowances that's suggested in the plan would be welcome. Because those have been either ignored or abused, depending on how you look at it.

The additions to the public space are pleasing and well illustrated. And few can argue that if there are going to be more buildings or bigger buildings that they should be more sustainable.

The plan draws heavily on some so-called "smart growth concepts" which offer many progressive ideas. And I'd urge anyone trying to understand this
plan to read up on smart growth and new urbanism, which
is a similar, though not quite identical, concept.
These are mentioned in the plan, but not really fully
described. And you can find representative summaries of
those in books in libraries or on-line.

And I would suggest in particular a couple of
the descriptions at the Transport Demand Management
Encyclopedia, which can be found at vtpi.org. And then
you have to go a couple levels into the /tdm, transport
demand management. And they've got some nice
definitions, explanations, and links.

I'm a little concerned that because of it's
overall tilt towards high-rise development, the plan
doesn't wholly integrate some of the good ideas that we
seen in the up-zoning, arguably undermines them. And
it's important to recognize that even so-called "smart
growth" is growth, which I think is an increasingly
troublesome concept for us as a society to grapple with.

Now, my six points. My major concern is that
this plan lets the exception become the rule, that as
Barb Rakley described, there was a lot of concern
expressed by the public as to a number of buildings that
seemed to change the transformation, excuse me, the
character of downtown. These were eluded to a little bit in the beginning of the plan. But really the only dissatisfactions expressed in the introduction were along the lines of developers being upset by the lack of certainty or property owners, whereas actually there's been a lot of public unrest. Not universal. But there has been a lot over the direction that downtown has gone so rapidly. And the concern has been over some of the height and people saying, what's happening to downtown Evanston? Where's it going?

And the plan's answer to this is to say, well, the old zoning's no longer relevant because it's been exploited through the site development allowances. I don't think that the answer, then, is to abandon that. It'd be like saying, well, the old rules in baseball against steroids and human growth hormone are no longer relevant because they've been broken by a half dozen people who have set new records. And so we're going to let everybody do what Barry Bonds did.

I don't think that's a proper planning principle. If there's a patient who's experiences a recent, rapid and uneven growth spurt, as Evanston has, I wouldn't write a prescription for steroids and growth
hormone. Granted, there's some medical exceptions. Ritalin was prescribed for hyperactive children. But I don't know if we want to say that our downtown has ADD.

The second point is that I don't think we should have so large an amount of base increases. It's very important to recognize that if we went with what's recommended in the plan, in the Core district in particular, there's a lot of increases which I illustrated in a map that I handed to the Commission the last time I spoke when we were talking about the Transitional districts in the base zoning. It's not across the board. In fact a few small areas actually are down-zoned. But overall I think you have to conclude that it's a large increase in the base.

And the entire failure in a cap and bonus plan, and that's what's being proposed, is a let's cap the heights and then allow certain bonuses above that. So it's a cap and bonus plan. The entire success or failure of a cap and bonus plan depends on where the base zoning is set and how the bonuses are administered.

Height and density for a city to give away is an asset. And we only have one sky. We only have one skyline. We only have so much cubic feet of volume to
allow it to be developed. And it shouldn't be given away for nothing. That's not simply an ideological belief of mine. I think it's a sound planning principle.

And I would refer again to the articles that Katherine Gregor wrote in the Austin Chronicle about a month ago. And I would urge that those base increases be racheted down to something more resembling what we have now, that if the caps are to be increased at all as a base above what we have now, that those somehow be sold, perhaps at an auction.

Evanston's starved for revenue. And if you're going to have, if you're going, I'm absolutely serious, this is not a laugh line, folks, if we're akin to cap and trade systems that have been suggested for carbon emissions or other types of emissions, we can consider the volume that we have as something that we can sell. And let those that want to vie for it compete for it in a market by which the City of Evanston's the beneficiary.

Third, I like form-based zoning in general, form-based code, but I wouldn't wholly abandon uses. Page, there's a contextual history of what happened in
downtown Evanston. And there's been a lot of focus on
Old Orchard as having been the downfall of downtown
Evanston. But there were a lot of other things going on
at the same time that Old Orchard was being developed.
The Edens was built. There was a lot of
racial tension in the 60s and the 70s. There was high
interest rates. There was, we had the S&L crisis happen
in the 80s. Evanston went through some demographic
changes. You didn't have the big families that you used
to have. You moved towards a lot of empty nesters in
parts of town for a while. A lot of corporation fled
Cook County and went out to the collar counties. And
catalog and then on-line sales bit into retail pretty
hard. And so you can't look just at Old Orchard.
And then when Evanston started to revive
downtown Evanston I would contend that it was not just
the Whole Foods development or the residential that
drove it. That from my perspective, it was, if
anything, the liberalizing of liquor licenses was
probably the single greatest factor that allowed a
certain number of restaurants to thrive.
And then the coffee shops suddenly turned it
into a place where people were active and around more
than after five o'clock. And that was largely students. And you would notice it driving through that suddenly things were happening in Evanston.

And then there was the knowledge worker influx largely driven by the much maligned Research Park.

And I think these three things all helped spark a downtown comeback in addition to the residential. And you can't single one out and say, well, the residential drove it or the coffee houses drove it. I think they worked in a synergy.

And we have to very careful with the uses that we allow and even the form. You can argue, if you go back and look at old pictures, that downtown Evanston was a pretty thriving place right up until about the point that the Fountain Square building and the State National Bank building were put in. And perhaps there was something that those buildings did architecturally that had a negative impact on the perceived character of Evanston by the surrounding community.

From a lot of perspectives the State National Bank Plaza, as I still refer to it, doesn't work as a plaza. And it violates a lot of principles about how plazas should work as public spaces. And it's important
to get it right. Because what we're talking about is transforming the character of downtown Evanston.

And we're, this plan from my perspective largely follows what developers want to do, which is not necessarily bad, but it's not necessarily what the community wants. And it's not necessarily, more importantly, what's best for the community in the long run. Because it's driven by more short-term profits. And if we're wrong, it could take decades to recover.

Fourth, on smart growth and new urbanism, if you look at pages 55 to 61 of the plan, that's about five pages out of the 108. And that's what's devoted to public spaces. And I like the discussion of public spaces, but to me smart growth and new urbanism should center on public spaces, that the discussion should begin with a discussion of what's for the public and what are people coming to downtown for and making a real place where people can gather and build out from there.

One of the revealing comments in the recently released transcript of the minutes of the closed meeting on the 708 Church project was the comments of Alderman Moran who was comparing the proposed project, including the Fountain Square redevelopment, to the Plaza Mejor in
Madrid, I presume he meant, or to Plaza Mejors that you have in numerous Spanish or South American or Central American cities.

Well, if you look at plazas in different cities, and in Spain or the one in Madrid, etcetera, etcetera, what you tend to have is a large open space with a sense of enclosure so that people feel protected, which is why the State National Bank Plaza doesn't work. Because you feel like you're up on an exposed target.

And I would recommend taking a look at the Project for Public Spaces, PPS.org, which goes through some of the best public spaces in North American and some of the worst, and some of the best in the world and some of the worst.

And I don't see this plan as really built around public space. It has some good examples of public spaces, but it seems more like trying to shoehorn them into, around developments and planned or suggested larger developments. And I don't know that's really the logical way to do it.

We're limited obviously. A constraint is that things are already built and we don't have a square. Fountain Square exists as an intersection of five
streets coming together into it. What the planners have
done in suggesting a realignment of those streets is, I
think, really intriguing and very creative.

And maybe we should consider taking it the
next step further, which is either to close Orrington
off completely because you have Sherman and Orrington
sort of duplicating their functions, or to see if we've
got enough room there to create an actual square with
the traffic circulating around it. Because right now in
the plan it exists largely as using different colored
pavers which create the illusion of a plaza. But I
don't think that I could go and give a speech in the
middle of Sherman and Davis.

The next point is that, again, looking at new
urbanism principles, I just don't see a lot of support
for the idea that the tallest building in downtown
should be built on the smallest block of land. That's,
it's really sort of counter to the idea of starting with
a public space. If anything, if you have a really tall
building, you put a lot of space around it.

And my concern here is, go downtown right now
and watch the Trump Tower going up and see what it does
to the grandeur and the majesty of the Tribune Tower and
the Wrigley Building, which are illustrated around the corner here. And it's really starting to dwarf them. And I think, my concern would be what that does to the plaza-like feel that currently exists at the Marshall Fields and the library area. And you know, if we're going to take that to the logical extension, maybe we should have a 90-story building and put it on Hotdog Island up at Crawford and Gross Point.

Finally, and this is the most controversial point I'll make, but I feel compelled to make it. And Ms. Goodman says that it's always a good thing when the bars go up on a graph. And that depends what you're measuring.

The controversial point that we all have to address is that ultimately growth is not green. We as Americans and as successful middle class consumers are capable of a great deal of self-rationalization and denial about what we do. But ultimately, even though it's good to buy locally, it's not progressive to be engaged in some sort of competition with Skokie or Wilmette or even Chicago to see who can sell the most stuff. We want our retailers to succeed. But ultimately we're already consuming too much, building

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too much. And as a planet, we're running out of resources ranging from water, to fish, and to peak oil. And even green buildings, and I believe that every building that goes up as base should be green, thank you, consume enormous amounts of energy. There's a good reason why a gallon of gas costs $3 and a new hybrid vehicle costs $30,000. And it's largely related to the amount of energy that goes into creating the end product.

Over 25 years ago Robert Costanza, in an article in Science Magazine called, Imbedded Energy and Economic Valuation, basically demonstrated that the reason for the difference between a $3, although it wasn't $3 then, between the price between a gallon of gas or, and the hybrid is, the amount of energy that goes into it. That basically, if you look at the price of a product, a manufactured or built product, that it pretty much represents the imbedded energy that goes into making it.

The hybrid vehicle will save you some on gas. But the worst thing that America could do for its energy footprint would be if everybody in America went out tomorrow and junked their existing car and demanded
that Detroit and Japan and Korea build them new hybrid
vehicles. Every single piece of steel in the hybrid has
to be mined. The mines are operated with energy. The
people who mine the stuff in the mines have to drive
there in cars. And then it has to be shipped down here
or maybe over to China and then back again.

And ultimately if you buy a $500,000 condo,
even assuming that it, you can save $5 on a round trip
downtown to the Loop by taking the CTA rather, or the
Metra, rather than driving, you and your spouse,
assuming two of you do it, would have to ride every day
for the next 75 years to make up for the imbedded energy
that went into buying that new condo.

Now we're often -- a dichotomy between well,
shouldn't we be building in the City as opposed to
building in the cornfields? And I think we're somewhat
guilt tripped into that false dichotomy. Because it
begs the question of how much growth we can afford
overall and whether or not we can handle more and
whether or not we're enabling it and subsidizing it and
are we making the best use of the small towns throughout
America that have been abandoned and the neighborhoods
that have been abandoned.
So at some point in this when the moral question and the environmental question comes up I think we have to avoid the convenient answer that as a society, and as we tell ourselves as politicians who want to be elected tell us the answers we want to hear, which is that we can pretty much go on doing everything pretty much as we've done it and everything's going to be fine. Because the challenge for the next half century and for the world that our children will inherit will be how to be happy with and make the best of what we have already. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: It has been suggested that we let a couple more people speak. But I think we're going to break now anyhow, so.

(Off the record.)

MS. KELLY: Hello. My name is Joann Kelly, 1003 Wesley. I also work in downtown Evanston.

And I just want to, this is the first time I've come to a meeting regarding this issue. So I want to applaud all of you who have done so much work in holding, trying your best to hold the people here accountable and all the people that are working for us here as well.
My comment is short. I work in downtown Evanston for our community bank. And my concern is for our local merchants and retailers. The woman that was here earlier, I heard her mention that that is also an important part of the plan, to keep our, however we define local merchants, here. I also heard her mention that it's usually the national tenants that can support the new construction, which looks to me that the wedge that we're redeveloping, and I am pro development, would likely mean change for them.

And you know, I hear some grumbling from them. And I know that would mean change. And affordable movement for them is what's of concern to me. You know, they can't, these folks, some of these folks cannot afford 36, 40 bucks a square foot.

If you look at Sherman Plaza, most of that is now national tenant. And as we go down the line, I just think it's a slippery slope, you know, to balance both national tenants and our local merchants that we have here. But it's what makes Evanston distinct. So I don't think that's an easy job. But I hope you do your best in balancing it.

I tried to combine my thoughts with Ron, but
he didn't stop talking. So, next --

MR. KYSIAK: Good evening. My name is Ron Kysiak. I live at 2921 Sheridan Road. I work for a private and not-for-profit economic development organization called Evanston In Venture, which is supported by the major employers in the community, including the City and the university, probably one of the few places they actually do sit down together at the same table.

I really am impressed with the amount of information I'm getting tonight from folks who've done a lot of homework. I think they've done a really good job of digging through a lot of information. I appreciate the passion that they feel about what's going on here or what they think is going on here.

I only have a couple comments to make. And I won't take much time. My perspective has to be from I guess a different point of view. I am a resident. But I don't live downtown. But my work is all about the long-term economic health of Evanston.

And I don't know, you've probably heard this before, but only 11 percent of our land is zoned commercially. Skokie has a lot more. Most of the more
business-like suburbs have a lot more.

And somebody before was asking how much of our land was off the tax rolls. Well, surprisingly enough, it's 45 percent, okay? And the other 44 percent is in residential. So there you go.

We have 11 percent of our land in commercial zoning. Some of it is being taken off commercial zoning by, believe it or not, the condominium developments which are going on commercial land and now becoming now residential. So we have even less.

Because we have less commercial land, we have a higher tax rate. People say, well, how come our tax rate's so high? Because we have fewer pieces of commercial property to tax, which as you know, pay double the amount that you do as a resident because of the screwy way that Cook County politicians have messed up the assessment operation.

So what do we try to do? We try to make better use of that land by putting more stuff on it. Because that's one of the few ways we can actually raise revenue for the community, is to make whatever we have worth more money, all right?

Why do the developers want to go so high?
Because they're paying an awful lot of land at the bottom. And the higher they go, the better chance they have of making a profit. So they understand those land economics. And that's why they want to go high.

And we don't want them to go so high because it affects our quality of life. Somewhere between what they need to do and we have to have is probably going to be where we're going to end up in this process, okay?

I'm extremely concerned about a couple of things. One, and I want Mrs. CAREERIST and Jean, both mentioned office space. I heard the consultants, in my report, five to 10 thousand-square feet a year of demand. I'm working with a company now that needs 4,000-square feet of Class B space for around 22 bucks a foot. They can't find it here. They're going to Chicago.

The City Council recently approved the demolition of 1890 Maple, 37,000-square feet of office space going away. The 7098 building, we may very well need buildings of that size and -- and everything else.

But there's dozens of small businesses in two stories of the office space in that building. Now where are they going to go?
So one of the things I would suggest or recommend is that I've heard a lot about density and height about condominiums, but I've heard nothing about density and height about office development. And if you're going to give bonuses for affordable housing so someone can go higher in a condominium, why not provide bonuses for affordable office space as one of the tradeoffs so that individual Evanstonians and small businesses here can continue to remain here?

The second issue, I guess, is a little broader. And it sort of goes back to my initial comments. We're talking growth and growth and growth. That's true. But mostly what we're talking about is change. And it's difficult and we don't like it. And it's a problem for everybody. We have to learn to adapt to the growth, but we've got to manage it better. We've not done a good job of managing our growth, I don't think, in this community.

For a number of years now every single deal that has come into the City has been started from scratch ever since they required every deal to go through PUD process. There have been no rules. So every deal starts at zero. And many times the developer
looks, comes in and says, well, I'm going to start where
the last guy got off. And that doesn't work. We need
to have a plan.

What these guys are talking about is a
mechanism by which we can at least put things into
compartmentalized areas with limitation absolute on
height with bonuses which are clearly spelled out what
you have to do, all right? I like that. We know what
we're getting. Now you all and we all can argue the
height and we all can argue the bonuses. And I think we
all will all the way down to the final vote of the City
Council. But for God's sakes, let's get a plan. Let's
get a mechanism in our hands that we can use to get
ourselves around the continued change of our downtown.

And those are my comments. Thank you.

MS. LEQUAR: My name is Diane LeQuar. I live
at 1516 Hinman Avenue.

I'd like to thank the Commission, I'd like to
thank the consultants for all the work that you've put
into the draft of the downtown plan. It's a thoughtful
and thorough document and addresses many of the
challenges of the current planning process.

But I'll get straight to the first of my three
brief points. Commissioner Woods said, I think at the last meeting, that the most helpful thing would be if speakers could try to affect the plan rather than vent. So I thought about that. And I said, okay, here's how I'd like to affect the plan. I would like to argue that the range of building heights in all three transitional zones should be six to eight stories flat.

These are areas that transition from core to residential. And they should respect that transition. To say that in a transitional zone you could have 10 or 15 stories is problematic as allowed under RD-2 and RD-3 in the draft plan. Ten and 15 stories are core heights. They should stay in the core. And six to eight is what should be allowed in the transition zones.

Extraordinary public benefits might merit a 33 percent increase in the project, over a project's base height, say from six stories to eight, as in RD-1. But I don't think granting up to 66 percent greater height makes much sense in the transitional areas.

Second point, I agree with other speakers that there should be a definition of what height stories should be. To omit such a measure would leave a significant vulnerability in the code.
And finally, I would urge the Commission to preserve the citizens' rights to be involved with the process of development approval. I know the process in recent years has seemed to stretch interminably long. But for the most part, not altogether, but for the most part, I think the results have been better for the City because the citizens have been involved. So I urge you to make sure that, even with the switch to the form-based code, that public participation is still an important part of the process for Evanstonians. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Thank you. Next.

MR. GOULD: Good evening. My name is Oliver Gould. I'm at 1730 Hinman.

One, I'd like to thank every member of the Commission for the time and energy and effort and creativity you've been putting into this. We, I as a citizen, appreciate it.

However, I'm deeply concerned after listening to Barb Rakley and Mary Singh that you are really considering not a charrette, but you're considering a charade. And I'm concerned that you should be concerned about also.

I will leave a picture that someone gave me
for your consideration. I only have one copy. If you'll just pass it down. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Thank you. Next.

MS. CORLING: I hope this is temporary. I've been getting my last load of lawn waste out of --

My name is Diane Corling. I live at 1914 Orrington.

And I too would like to thank you all, as Mr. Gould did. And many others must feel this for your service in sitting at all of these meetings and all your other work on the Plan Commission.

When I moved to Evanston 32 years ago I had been Chairman of the Kane County Planning Commission out in those easy-to-develop agricultural hinterlands. And I thought, what a relief it will be to come to a place where the land use decisions have all been made. The fact that I was a faculty member in Urban Planning at IIT should have made me wiser. I want to say also that in the intervening 40-some years I have supported myself in part as a consultant on transportation projects doing socio-economic and ecological impact studies.

And I want to restrict my comments tonight to only a couple areas. Because the other citizens have so
very thoroughly and impressively talked about many of
the details. I'd like to speak about parking and the
one-way street reversion to two-way as proposed.

I note that in the, beg your pardon, have I
still got it? Yeah. In the narrative the, one of the
aims is to reduce the use of surface parking. Another
is to reduce the impact of storm water. I've not heard
too many people mention that. Another one, to make
navigating less confusing.

And with regard to reducing the use of surface
parking lots, I think this proposal, which may have had
some origin in the workshops, I hope I am not without
standing, I hope that I have standing to talk here even
though I've only attended a few of the sessions on this
and the Lake Front, it seems to me that there is a
central question that the citizenry or the consultants
may have been working to try to define. Are we now an
urban place? Are we a completely urban place where
three very large parking structures achieved at great
difficulty and over time, these three structures indeed
have a number of parking spaces?

Should I, to go to LeMoy Hardware, which my
112-year-old house requires constant visits to, should I
use a parking structure? Or can I expect in an old
village manner to, and perhaps an outdated pattern,
drive right over there, find a place on the block, go
in, make my purchase, and go home?

I live within the one-quarter mile zone of the Central area. And by the way, I think one of the, in
addition to the sale of alcohol, I think late night bookstores have -- the Barnes and Noble first within a
couple of blocks of my life has been a magnificent step forward in making this an urban, an urban place.

But if I'm carrying something more than a couple of books, I will use the car. And even when my legs are fit, if I'm buying some jugs of cleaning material, I'm old-fashioned enough, I want to go to the store and bring it back. If I wanted to go to a great big place with a parking lot and hike in and get a bunch of stuff and bring it out on a giant truck, I would go to Home Depot. And I do that as seldom as possible even though we're capturing some of the tax receipts from that retail operation.

I think it's not clear to some of us, maybe we are in a time warp, whether we have left behind us the old-fashioned. I used to buy my office supplies from
LeBons up on Central Street. If we have just seen the
demise, and will see more and more of the demise, not
only of the home loan enterprises, but the, go down
there and get something and go back home and maybe make
a couple of other stops on the way.

If in fact we have become totally urban, then
we should be happy with three big parking structures and
get used to it. Or if there's anything left of this. I
love running into people on the street, people that I
know or have seen at some of these meetings. And I say,
wow, hello, you were that smart lawyer from Central
Street and so forth. But have we left that behind?

I want to leave with you a couple of, I went
back to some old aerial photographs. And I went back
only as far as 1963, was as far as I could go, to see if
we had one-way service on the downtown pairs of streets
at that time. And by looking at the angle of the
parking, I can see for sure that in 1963 we had Sherman
and Orrington operating as a one-way pair.

Who is it that's confused and that needs to
make navigating less confusing? I realize that there's
been a great deal of population growth, but I don't know
how long it takes them to get used to it.
With regard to the operation of one-way streets, it is an axiom, has been among traffic engineers, that they're carrying capacity is greater than that of a two-way operation. And the, the opportunity for, the likelihood of conflicts, is greatly reduced.

But contra, people may drive faster on a one-way street. Well, when it's only the length of our one-way streets, I'd suggest that perhaps, as with the high waves on Lake Michigan, is the speed an issue? The -- from the north to the south end of Lake Michigan, or in contrast with that across the narrow part of the lake, maybe we're not going to have the impact of excessive speeds because it's a one-way street.

For turns across traffic I'm not sure that I can imagine the proposed high-rise building or the Orrington Hotel operating with a two-way street there on the west side of, at this time, northbound Orrington. Not quite sure how we service what we've got. But the fact that we have been used to it for a long time, some of us locals, and I'd like to think that the new people can acclimate themselves as we get a new Director of Public Works. And as it says in the
plan, the traffic proposals will be analyzed by local
staff.

I think a quick look by any of the
Commissioners or other citizens at the website of the
Institute of Traffic Engineers will give you a lot of, a
lot of insights. I hope you can trust your judgment to
evaluate the appropriateness and the authority with
which anyone you find on Google may be speaking.

But when I went to Google and just typed in
Institute of Traffic Engineers, the whole first page had
traffic calming. I typed in one-way streets and traffic
calming comes up as a major topic in which those are
mentioned.

Do we want people to race through town? I
think the distance is too short for the speed to be an
issue. Do we want ready access to the properties?
You've certainly heard lot about maintaining our local
businesses. And I will simply ask you to cooperate with
and encourage the participation of the engineering staff
with the City as you consider implementing that
proposal.

I'll try to speed on here. I said I was only
going to speak in the areas of my observation and my
experience. None of these are backed by research, which
I, but only my observation as a citizen.

I'm not sure that you've all had, this is a
publication called, A Background to Planning: Problems
and issues in the Central Business District. And I made
one copy only of it. This is December 1976. Sandra
Gross was then Chairman of the Plan Commission. And
Richard Carter was the Director of Planning. And this
was just before the Clark Street connector was built to
link Sheridan Road over to Ridge, built with the
purchase of land from Northwestern. And some of the
history in here, including the litany of traffic
generators, department stores which no longer exist,
issues, may be of interest as you consider all the rest
of this. It may be in the department of the more things
change, the more they stay the same. But I think the
big city or small town issue is one that the quality of
life and the access to businesses is something that's
going to help influence your decisions.

As to reducing the use of surface parking
lots, of course all of you will have spotted that one of
those proposed to be turned into a park is next to the
YMCA. Whether we should, as one of the blogs or
responses to Evanston Now suggested, well, the idea is
if you have to park that close, maybe you should be
getting the exercise by walking.

There are families and there are elderly
people for whom parking next to the Y is useful.
Turning it into a park seems to me of limited usefulness
in the overall context. The same, perhaps, for the lot
directly across the street, which is utilized by the
King Home and I believe is owned by Presbyterian Homes
at large. And the one next to the library. Gee, turn
that into a park also. I think a very careful look at
cost benefit and what's needed should be made.

And with regard to the possible relation of
the reduction of on-street parking or surface parking,
possible relation between that and urban storm water,
which is another concern thankfully not addressed very
greatly here, I would refer any citizens and Plan
Commission members to the work being done in Portland.

Admittedly, most of their storm water is as
water. They don't have the freezing season we do here.
But you can check CommissionerSam.com. One of their
Commissioners there has implemented a system of green
streets in which storm water is collected by widening
out into the street with green -- that do some on site
filtration. Also have the function of reducing the
widths of some of the streets for quicker pedestrian
crossing and some traffic calming, depending on how you
can figure them. And I will leave you just one copy of
a few pages that I've printed from that website and a
description of his -- idea for reference. We heard him
speak at a presentation by the Upper Des Plaines River
Valley Environmental Association.

And I will say only in closing, I certainly
hope that I never get ticketed for making a wrong turn,
navigating the middle of town trying to get to LeMoy
before they close at seven.

But what I, items that have been cited and
praised for possible replication include: the Roger
Carlson's Bookmans Alley, which is the length and shadow
of one man; the Chandler's building and plaza, which is
certainly a remarkable, noteworthy, and much-to-be-
praised project of architects and other professions.

Let's let inspiration happen. Let's let quality
happen. And I leave it to you to determine which
choices may let such things as that continue to occur
among us. Thank you all very much.
MS. JANES: Good evening. My name is Barbara Janes. I live at 802 Colfax Street.
And as I read the downtown plan there are several things that stand out for me that I feel need discussion and clarification. The plan contains, as everybody has said, many positive ideas that will improve the zoning practices in Evanston. The principle of form-based zoning applied wisely can improve Evanston's zoning policies. For the purposes of tonight's meeting I will focus on some of the concerns I have about the plan.

What strikes one from the outset is the statement that we Evanstonians want to live in an urban environment. Where did that statement come from? I attended some of the planning sessions and never heard that comment. When I talk to people from all areas of the City, and I have, I've talked to hundreds of people, and I have, they are appalled at the amount of development downtown. To whom did the consultants listen? Have we as a community had a dialogue on what kind of community we want Evanston to be?

The consultants cite the 2004 Visioning Report, the 2006 Strategic Plan, and the 2007 Guiding
Principles. None of these call for the amount of height and density this report calls for that create an urban feel for our City. So where does this urban thrust come from?

The report cites many weaknesses in the City's current zoning practices. That's very true. Yet as I read the zoning report, that as I read the report, it appears that past acknowledged poor decisions are dictating future practices.

My concept of a plan for the future is a wish list of what we would like to see if we had a clean slate, acknowledging the realities of what currently exists, but not encouraging future dense buildings. For, it just, it appears for example, I think that many of you and some of the City officials acknowledge that some of the decisions made to approve the buildings at 1881 Oak and 1890 Maple might not have been maybe some of your highlighted decisions. But what appears from this is that those buildings, which I think most people acknowledge are out of place, are driving the decisions on height for the northern boundary of downtown.

So why do we take bad decisions and make them part of future planning? To me that doesn't, that
doesn't make any sense. If we think that something should have been done better, then when, we should say, okay, we made some mistakes here, but in the future, we're going to do this. Because tall buildings across from those residential buildings, other than Twin Towers, don't really make much sense, to me in any case.

One of the comments you heard over and over again was what people want, that people want predictability in the zoning process.

I have two major, and these are really questions because if I've misread the report, please correct me, about the allowances of bonuses for providing public benefit.

One, the report states that the public benefit will be for downtown residents and visitors, in the beginning of each section, downtown residents and visitors. What about the rest of us? As you say repeatedly, it is everyone's downtown. Shouldn't allowances that will impact everyone who uses downtown benefit everyone?

Two, the report states that the approval process for floor, for approval for bonus floor area, would go through a public process. What would that
public process look like? As I read it, in my interpretation, and correct me if I'm wrong, as I read it, we would be back to Plan Commission hearings with City Council approval.

That does not solve the predictability problem. Who would be permitted to participate in these public process meetings? If the formula for computing bonus floor areas are not absolute, what do we accomplish by this new approach?

And then, you know, and then is there going to be a rubric, a checklist for the Zoning Administrator that, you know, who determines the quality of the public benefit? And whose decision is that? Is it only in the Zoning Administrator's? Or does it come back to you and then to the City Council? And then we have to come up and say, you know what, that public benefit doesn't meet the standards for daycare or whatever it is. You know, and I'm not clear that what I'm reading really solves that predictability. Now if I've misread it, please correct me.

Historic preservation is important in Evanston, at least I would hope that it still is. We have lost too many wonderful symbols of our history
already. The public benefit contribution to preservation makes no sense to me. We should not destroy a historic building and be permitted to contribute money to preserve somebody else's historic building. We should not destroy the historic building we already have.

The report reportedly mentioned, repeatedly mentions that downtown should be pedestrian friendly. I for one do not find walking in the shadow, in wind tunnel of tall buildings pedestrian friendly. Many of the people who live in or on the periphery of downtown are elderly who do not do, who will not do the amount of shopping the Chamber of Commerce would hope they would do if it is cold and windy. And it is windy. What have we accomplished?

And I, you may have received a letter that I wrote specifically about the tower, about wind tunnels. Because as some of you know, I ride my bike everywhere. And I can tell you all about the wind tunnels on Maple and on Davis and, because I experience them depending upon the direction of the wind. Sometimes it's good for me and I zip through and other times it's, you know, it's a lot of hard work.
And I haven't checked this out, but I wouldn't be surprised if a wind tunnel effect isn't one of the things that is affecting how people react to the, I also call it the State Bank Plaza, as the wind rips around. And it's just not pleasant to be there like on a day like today.

I go to Oak Park every week and often walk through their downtown because it's pleasant. And if I'm not mistaken, at least one of the consultants that's working with us works with Oak Park on their downtown. The tallest building I've observed is 10 to 12 stories. One of the most pleasant aspects of the pedestrian experience in Oak Park is that you can see the sky everywhere. There's a feeling of light and openness.

Even today Evanston is creating a claustrophobic feeling in the blocks on which there are tall buildings. This is not the pleasant pedestrian-friendly feeling the plan says we want. And the question everyone is asking, and you've heard it here tonight, where did the number 42 come from for the number of stories in the Fountain Square block? I'd like to know chapter, verse, time, and place. Because I didn't hear it. And apparently no one else in the
audience did either.

You can talk all you want about citizen input, but this plan in too many places does not reflect what I have heard people say. Thank you.

MR. MARLIT: I'm not quite sure how to segue this. I mean, the --

PARTICIPANT: You need an address first.

MR. MARLIT: Travis Marlit, downtown retail business owner. Reside at 1122 Maple Avenue. You'd think I'd get used to that by now.

The presentation is about the core zoning areas. Because of my owning the downtown retail location, it's certainly a big concern of mine. As a business owner I try to remain somewhat neutral about the density issues and the residential issues. I think I made the statement at the last meeting, as a business owner I'd like it as high and as many residents shopping downtown as possible. But as also an Evanston resident, I know that that's not the right thing. And I will continue to try to be somewhat neutral in terms of the density.

However, I'm concerned. And I respect you guys tremendously. You guys are in such a difficult
position. And City Council is as well. We hear from hundreds of Evanston residents at these workshops and charrettes and so forth, which is absolutely nothing compared to the total population of the City. And how do you take the vocal, I'll refer to it as a vocal minority, I don't know that it's a representation of the minority of the population, but it's certainly a minority of the population that's showing up at these meetings and so forth, how do you take that vocal core group of people who are speaking against height and project that to the opinion of the citizens of Evanston? I don't know how you do that. I don't know how the consultants have done that. And I don't know that it has been done.

In my discussions with people on the street in downtown Evanston, I would say that most of them are in agreement with the voice here. They spend time in downtown. They, they're locals. They're long-time residents. They want to keep the quaint feel.

As I talk to other residents who are not so connected to the downtown area, I get a mix. About, well, I'll say half, know about the master plan effort, know about the changes that are underway, and don't
really care. As long as it's not a high-rise going next
to their single-family home well away from downtown,
they'll let the process work itself out. And they're
not really that interested in the outcome.

The other half of the people that I bump into
and talk to, including my neighbors, Ridge/Davis area,
don't even know there's something in works. They have
absolutely no clue. So I don't know how you take all of
that together and try to draw a conclusion as to what
the majority of Evanston residents would like to see in
the downtown area.

Having said all of that, what I'm missing, as
somebody who is interested in it, is the why. We have
what I think, the consultants have done a fantastic job.
I think they've earned their pay well of meeting their
charter. And I think their charter was to justify some
height in the downtown area. And what I don't know is
where that charter came from.

Certainly the people at the meetings have not
said they wanted height. It's the City Council or City
staff. And forgive me for not understanding the
politics involved there. Somebody from the City is
saying, we need height. We need the income from height.
That's the way the City of Evanston is going to survive. We need height. And we need to find a way of working it through the citizen comments so that we can justify height and have, do away with the planned development process so that we don't have to listen to the citizen comments over and over again about why they don't want height and then approve the plan anyway. We're going to do it once. We're going to hire the consultants so that it's not the City that's doing it. It's the consultants that are putting forth this proposal for height. We're going to go through the process, listen to citizen comments, then we'll approve the master plan. And now we don't have to do that again.

That's my feeling. But, and I think it would be a lot easier and more palatable to everyone and to me if there was some of that, why do we need height? What opportunity have the citizens of Evanston been given to not have height? If we don't have height, what can we do instead?

You know, if height or residential density in downtown is necessary for financial reasons, where's the discussion about the alternatives? If we don't have the
height, what does that mean for the City of Evanston financially? I haven't heard those discussions. Maybe the citizens of Evanston would be willing to take the alternative. I'm assuming it means cut back or less growth or higher property taxes or I don't know what the alternative are. But I haven't heard that discussion. I haven't heard the opportunity for the citizens of Evanston to say, yeah, that's a tough bullet to bite, but we'll take it. And I think that that's necessary.

Okay, regarding the, the core zoning, we've heard a couple of comments tonight. Retail vacancy, seven percent, perfectly acceptable. Sounds good to me. But we've got an issue in that the, the walking retail landscape of downtown is not very appealing. We've got a lot of blank space. And I don't mean empty retail space. I mean blank space. We've got brick walls and, and just nothing. So it's very difficult to plot a pedestrian walk through downtown that provides nice window shopping and things like that. It's really kind of one block. And then you've got to double back on another block and double back. And I don't see anything in the master plan that really tries to address that.
The master plan and the zoning codes proposed is talking about what's going to happen when we build something new, admittedly in scattered sites around the City. So what are we going to do with the existing buildings and the existing store front space, the existing pedestrian frontal space? We need something in the plan to address what's there as well and to guide us in renovations, not just new construction, huge developments, but the renovation of the downtown area as well.

They certainly did some things. And the Bookmans Alley is the good example, some recommendations for the way of making things like that happen. I don't know how practical some of those things are. How do we take some of the blank store front, sorry, blank frontal space on the sidewalks, and turn it into something more palatable to, to shoppers or whatnot.

I came in late so I don't know the woman's name. I think it was Linda. Was she the one kind of talking during that first half hour? Made the statement, we, it's dangerous to try to control the mix. And I think she was referring mostly to national retail versus local independent retail. It's dangerous to
control that mix.

I don't see how we can do anything else. If as the citizenry of Evanston, we want to have an appealing downtown, if we let the market drive it, we're going to have, and purely so, if we let the market drive it, we're going to have big buildings with lots of big space that's overly expensive, that only the national retailers can afford. And that is going to become our downtown Evanston. And if that is undesirable, then we must control it. We cannot let the market drive it. We must control it.

Neighboring communities have done this. And admittedly, they've got a completely different situation. But neighboring communities have fairly strict ordinances, Highland Park is the best example, have fairly strict ordinances as to what can go into the downtown store front spaces, what kind of businesses they are. And anything that's not on that list has to go through a public comments process and approval process and so forth. They control it very closely. And it's not just the drive-thru banks and ATMs and that kind of things. It's, you know, a furniture store. You know, it's specific kinds of businesses that can go in
there and even the size of those businesses.

The other thing that the master plan, I think, is missing is, I'm sorry. I'm going to back up. Plan summary by section provides this soundbite: The retail market analysis reflects a vibrant and diverse downtown. That may be true, but each new development that occurs is driving out the small retailers whether it's a multi-site retailer or not. It's still driving them out. They can't afford it.

Earlier strategic plans and the 2007 Guiding Principles asked that Evanston maintain a balance between retail and service uses and between regional and national chains. And if by retail they meant restaurants and service businesses, then we've succeeded. Because we've certainly got a large growth of the restaurants. And everyone I talk to says, we like the fact that there's lots of restaurants, but isn't there too many restaurants? One is enough. One is enough restaurants, enough.

And to belabor this point, the following bullet is from the summary of a focus group of the downtown commercial property owners hosted by Evmark during the charrettes. And this is a quote: "More
stores," this is what they want, "more stores selling
soft goods such as apparel and home furnishings are
needed." In other words, we're getting too many
restaurants. We're getting too many service businesses.
We really need some, some soft good merchants downtown,
which I happen to own a business like that.

While we concentrate on the overall picture of
zoning ordinances in development, let's not forget the
policies, ordinances if necessary, in the zoning code or
otherwise as to what kind of businesses can be there.

All right. One of the other things that I
see. There's kind of this implied statement that says
we're doing this cap and bonuses system, I kind of like
that phrase, cap and bonuses system, for these defined
areas. With this kind of tongue in cheek statement that
says, yeah, but, there's one site that's ripe for
development. You don't need to worry about it anywhere
else. Here's another site that's ripe for development.
You don't really need to worry about it anywhere else.
Yeah, we're putting this in place, but nobody's going
to build up those whole areas to that height. So you
don't need to worry. This is okay.

How about codifying that? If there's a
presumption that only some sites within those zoned areas are going to get built to those heights, let's codify it. If this goes through, if the public comment is survived and we end up with some sort of form-based coding, why not put some limitations in there? Yes, here's how you can get the height. But for a zone or pieces of the zone or whatever it might take, we only want so many stories for this block. So once you've built that building, then nobody else can put a building of that height there. So if there's a, if there's a selling point here that it's acceptable because we don't think that kind of development is going to happen, let's put it on paper. Let's codify it.

Okay, I'm done. Thank you very much.

MS. LINDWALL: Hi. I'm back. Jean Lindwall, 625 Library Place.

I'd also like to, you know, thank the consultants for actually doing, you know, getting a lot of ideas out on the table and you know, pretty, you know, thorough document that we can all respond to. And I think that the market information that Goodman and Williams put together is really helpful to have in terms of the, the context and the discussion.
I also want to thank you for what you've done so far and what you're going to be doing. Because you have a big job ahead of you.

I've got a couple of concerns. And I want to focus on the downtown core, Central Core block again. The, you know, the consultant team really, you know, have done what they were asked to do. And one of the things they were asked to do in the, when the RRP was sent out was to do a form-based coding that really treated the Fountain Square block as a core block. I mean, they were asked to put big, tall buildings there. Whether or not that was fair to ask then to, you know, design their zoning around that or not, you know, that's for the Planning Commission to really decide.

The other problem that we have is that in all of this, and I raised this at the last time, we haven't really talked about, you know, the commercial parking, the parking garages, and some of the other pieces that fit into this. And I know we've got a multi-motor 20-year transportation plan for the City that's going to happen over the next year. But clearly, you know, issues about parking, pedestrian travel, transit, basically all of the modes that come together in the
downtown, are some, the focus of another study.

And in trying to decide whether or not certain land use recommendations really fit what the residents, what you want, what's good for Evanston, that information just isn't going to be available to you as you're making your decisions. And I think that that makes things doubly hard for going forward with approving or some sort of a downtown master plan and zoning recommendations.

With respect to the Central Core, you know, in reading the text, it really sounds like it's straight out of the PD application for 708 Church and the March City Council Executive Session meeting minutes, which I have a real problem with just as a citizen. One of the things that happened if you read the Executive Session meetings, everyone, you know, the Council, City Council, were you know, bandying about, well, we should just get rid of the Fountain Square building, you know, create a bigger plaza.

I've been in discussions with a lot of folks. And you know, it's kind of fun to think about what if we cleared that block and made it a big park. And you know, in the original 1917 plan, that's exactly what it
was supposed to be.

However, we all need to be thinking about our
tax base. As we pretty much all know, we're facing big
tax increases to pay for police and fire pension
contributions that have been not as great as they should
have been over the last 20 years.

So we have to be thinking about what are, you
know, what is going to be the economic engine for our
downtown. And clearly we need to be looking for, you
know max, or optimizing, I think, as the consultant
said. And I agree. You know, we should be optimizing
our economic benefits.

And I think that, you know, Fountain Square is
obviously the key. It's got the most development
potential of pretty much any of the sites that have been
identified as potential development sites. And we have
to be real thoughtful and real careful about what kinds
of land uses are recommended.

In the discussion about, you know, kind of the
role and function of the Central Core, you know there's
a statement saying that it's highly visible from Church
and Davis and Orrington and Sherman. And the reality
is, if you, or riding, and it's highly visible from the
two transit lines.
If you're riding the L, as I do most days, you know, you can see glimpses of the Fountain Square block as you're going by on, you know, past Davis and past Church. But you can't see the whole block. You can't see it at all from the platform. And the only way you can see it from the Metra platforms is if you get at the very far end of either end. If you are looking from Chicago Avenue down Church or Davis, you can't really see it either.
So you know, there's this notion that we should be connecting, you know, east-west with tall buildings. Because, you know, somehow taller buildings there, you know, on that block makes sense because you've got taller buildings east and west, you know, the Chase Bank building or Sherman Plaza.
However, if you, you know, walk the block and look, what the Fountain Square block is really visible from Orrington and Sherman, you know, in all directions either from the north or from the south. And what that suggests to me is that really what we're doing is, you know, it's a more of a connection between the north traditional and the south traditional areas. And while,
and it clearly has development potential. So I personally think that you should be thinking in terms of rather than a, some sort of a super core block, you should be looking at it more in terms of a super traditional block, something that would require ground-floor resident or retail uses which, if you look in the proposed use list for the downtown Core districts, it just says non-residential. So theoretically you could have just a big office, you know, office lobby on the ground floor of that block rather than the retail uses that are either proposed for the 708 Church development or, you know, that one would want in some other kind of development.

So you know, that's kind of a general philosophical thing. And you know, you could have a base height for a super traditional, say maybe six or eight stories, and going up to 15 or 20. I mean, you know, I don't think in most peoples' mind, you know, there've been several people who've suggested that maybe, you know, some height on that block might be okay, particularly if you orient it toward the Orrington Avenue side.

I've had, you know, kind of with one of my
neighbors I see on the L regularly, we've had thisunning debate over whether or not the Fountain Square
block should just stay with the buildings that it's got
right now. Because it's a really nice block. And it's
one of the more complete, you know, it's almost
exclusively retail frontage or whether or not some
height should be allowed.

And I've always kind of approached that block,
looked at that block coming down Sherman. And from the
Sherman side, you know, you've got some nice three,
four, you know, five-story buildings there. And
anything much taller than that on that frontage, I
think, would really be disruptive.

However, you know, she was standing in the,
you know, the Chandler's building plaza looking down
Orrington and goes, you know, some height there would
really finish off this, you know, this view and really
make that block pop out. So I think that there are a
bunch of design issues that you can look at.

But the other thing that I started, that I
raised last time, really has to do with parking and the
fact that we've got, you know, 5,500 public parking
spaces either in our, you know, on major spaces on the
street. And you know, the real issue is, you know, are we getting the people into our parking decks to help pay for the garage construction? And I trust that will be a focus on the transportation plan, you know, pricing structures when it gets to it. Although I think that it probably is something that would be appropriate to include in a downtown master plan. Clearly not the consultants team's charge. But I think it's important.

The other issue is, if we start losing the office space that we've got, that was really being accommodated by the parking garages and all these new developments are meeting their own parking demand, then who's going to park in the parking decks to pay for them?

You know, the Sherman Avenue garage, if you look in the financial statements, I think it's somewhere in the order of, you know, a 40-million dollar public, you know, commitment that, you know, that we're all going to be paying for. It's being funded largely through the parking revenues and also through the TIF. But you know, you've got to generate the money to pay for it.

The Washington Mutual National TIF for the
2006 tax year is generating 2.6 million dollars. That's what the City is getting for that TIF, which is only about $800,000 more than it got last year before Sherman Plaza was totally completed. So you know, over the next, what, 10 years that that TIF will be in existence, that's 25, 30 million dollars, somewhere in there. And hopefully that will be enough to support, you know, paying off the debt for the parking garage.

But if we want to help it along we ought to be not losing the office tenants that are parking there and replacing them with, you know, I think that there's a problem in trying to replace them with condos that are going to have their own parking. And they're not going to be using the parking garage.

I think it's real interesting that, you know, for the last few years, you know, you've had Chamber representatives get up and talk about how important it is that we have condos over the retail spaces because they're going to support our retail. And you know, to a certain extent that's true. And in many of the locations where that's happened, you know, it's not a good, necessarily a good retail site.

But you know, the reality is now, you know,
it's pretty clear from looking at the focus groups of
the downtown businessmen and the market information that
we do have a need. You know, that 100,000-square feet
of office space, if you look at it, one of the things in
the detailed report it talks about is how eventually,
you know, 1800 Sherman is likely to be all occupied by
Northwestern uses. There's a 50,000-square foot market
tenant that's in there. And the question is, where are
they going to go if we don't provide spaces for them to
go, and in particular spaces where their employees, the
visitors, are likely to use downtown businesses?

We're now, you know, I know that the Chamber
is now advocating that the, a Methodist pension
property, stay office. Well, and that's fine. I mean,
we've got, you know, they've got office, they've got
parking. But I don't know that the people who are
occupying that space are going to come down as often to
shop in downtown and support local businesses as they
would if we had an office building, you know, new office
building, on the Fountain Square block.

You know, and thinking through kind of how you
can accommodate the uses, in my, you know, again my
admittedly personal super-traditional scheme, I can see
having requiring ground-floor retail, you know, four or
five stories of office and then maybe, you know, some
residential above that to, you know, to create something
that you could finance. You know, as, in terms of
taxes, I think as Ron Kysiak has said, the reality is
you're just as well off with a 10 or 15-story office
building. As a matter of fact, you're better off with
an office building than you are a 40-story condo
building. Because they just, you know, just the
economics and the way the Cook County tax structure is
set up, the, you know, you need less office floor area
to generate the same amount of taxes. So I think that's
my general comment there.

I have just a couple of, you know, minor
comment on the Eastern Core designation which again, the
way the map is drawn, you have the Woman's Club shown as
a core building which I think is one of the, you know,
that building's listed in the National Registry of
Historic Places. So I'm not quite sure that the core
needs to extend, you know, that far north. Nor do I
think it's really necessary for the library to be in a
Core district. It's, you know, clearly not going to
change. You know, I'm not worried about it being
redeveloped anytime soon. But it just seems like that's not really necessary.

Now the final thing, and I'm --

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: Where do we put those buildings then if we don't put them in the core?

They've got to go some place.

MS. LINDWALL: They can go in the Edge district just as well, especially if you're going with six to, you know, in the apartment building just north of the library. It could go in an Edge district. Just, it's the way I'd want to put, you know, you can just extend that Edge district.

You know, if you look at the Willard Complex, the, you know, the library parking lot which is being proposed for park use, is already in the edge district. Just want you to include the Women's Club too.

But, and then, finally, this is a, this is a, and again, I think that there ought to be a stronger emphasis on rehabilitation as a way of increasing our tax base and not just, and providing a range of commercial spaces at varying price points. I think, you know, a significant, a gut rehab of a building is going to also help increase our tax base. And sometimes
pretty significantly. And I think that that should not be left out of the equation.

And then I guess finally, just a question.

You know, I've obviously read the plan fairly carefully. And I've, you know, along the way, I've got a lot of edits and comments. And I'd like to get to, I'm not quite sure who should be getting those. The Planning Commission, I presume, at some point. But you know, how do they get considered?

There are a lot of strategies, in reading through, that don't really seem to relate as crisply to the objectives as I think would be helpful, you know, for Planning Commissions 10 and 15 years from now. I mean, you're going to know what you meant and what you intended or what was intended by the plan. But somebody reading the document 10 years from now is only going to be able to rely on the words.

Also there are some just minor, you know, edits. You know, like Ridge is an avenue and not a road. And also just, there is some inconsistencies that I'm sure just in the rush to get the document out. For example, you know, the table in 7A, Table 7A in the upper areas that are in the districts don't always
completely coincide. But again, that's minor. And I think that what we should be doing here is focusing on big-picture kinds of items.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: I agree with you, Jean, that the edits and those kinds of things, you should give it to the Plan Commission. And also a copy to staff so that they can communicate with the consultants.

MS. LINDWALL: Sure. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: And I take it, Jean, you would have no objection, then, to a 20-story office building in the Fountain Square wedge block. You would not.

MS. LINDWALL: No. I really think I'd rather have a 15-story building. I mean, I have some, there is some design issues. But I think that a 20-story office building in the Fountain Square block if there was demand would be fine.

Especially, the other thing that I would think that you should be considering is again, looking at the supply, parking supply, and figuring out how much parking needs to be required for that kind of development on site and how much capacity we already have built into our existing garages.
Because, you know, I think that the reason that I would like to see the Fountain Square block be traditional is I agree with the consultant team that, you know, parking in the traditional areas ought not to be a requirement. You know, just because if you are not, you know, the fewer parking decks you have and the future, you know, the less visible those garages are, the better.

And I really like the idea of wrapping the, you know, the parking deck, you know, that's visible from the street, with usable, you know, office or residential uses.

So yeah, we have to have height. Or you know, I think it's the appropriate scale of height.

MR. BOVA: It's almost time to go home. Carl Bova, 1322 Rosalie Street. I'm a 24-year resident of Evanston.

And I'm happy to say I'm a friend and colleague of Diane Corling who spoke eloquently on the issue of parking before. And I'm going to second some of the things that she said and perhaps with a little bit more of my own input or ideas. Most of the information is contained in a letter that I sent to the
City yesterday. And I'm going to almost read it verbatim.

My comments tonight are in opposition to the proposed residential parking ratios that are contained in Sections 5 and 7 of the draft plan. I recommend no changes to the existing parking ratios.

Parking is a very tangible element of the transportation and economic engine of a city such as Evanston. It's inextricably linked to people's behavior and choices. Where will I live, shop, commerce, and recreate? How will I travel to home, work, shops and parks? Like many Evanstonians, my household has made choices based on the availability of mass transit, short walking distances to important destinations, and a well-tuned bicycle.

A monthly transit ticket, a good pair of shoes, generally good health, and that well-tuned bicycle is not enough. My household continues to need its cars to provide the means to reach more distant destinations, destinations that are not accessible to transit, to carry groceries and bulk products, and to attend business and public meetings. Cars are great at night or in inclement weather. As witnessed by the ways
that my household uses its vehicles, cars provide a greater role in economic decisions on a local level than you might think. Although four drivers reside in my home, we share two cars. And we drive those cars less than the national average number of miles.

But those cars need to go somewhere. They need to be stored. And they're stored on my property. And I would expect that every Evanstonian would make that choice as best they could. And as a city we ought to attempt to codify that requirement.

We chose to reside in Evanston because it was not congested with automobiles. And you can get where you needed to go by transit or by car or by walking. Downtown is generally pleasant. It's not jammed with traffic such as that found in the urban East or the suburban sprawl of the West. Adding cars to the streetscape or congestion is to be avoided at all costs. By maintaining parking ratios as presently zoned, cars will be stored where they belong - on private property and in garages and not in the public way, whether the public way is downtown or elsewhere in the City.

I applaud the City, the Planning Division, and its consultant team for investigating the issue of
parking and transportation on the whole as part of the downtown plan. However, the study work to date does not present clear evidence to change the parking ratios.

First, the number of sampling location, which was six, and a single night's survey at each location is insufficient to justify the accuracy of those findings or as the basis for revising any ratio.

Second, the present ratios are based upon the number of bedroom per unit, while the proposed ratios are based on square footage. I understand the fudging exercises that developers engage upon when calling bedrooms dens or offices. But I have not seen any real correspondence, on the other hand, between square footage and the number of bedrooms as they relate to parking ratios. So I can't really support any change in the measurement unit or the associated proposed ratios for the new unit of measure. In fact, today's lifestyle suggest larger square footages for spaces like family rooms, entertainment, offices, great rooms, bedroom suites, etcetera. In fact, this may yield more required spaces, which is contrary to the premise of reducing the number of parking spaces in order to get rid of that bulky feeling in buildings. More study is needed. And
perhaps it's outside of the planning effort entirely at this point.

Third, public outcry ensued upon the draft plan recommendations in a previous meeting which called for the elimination of the YMCA and the library surface lot, road closures, and the restoration of two-way traffic on present one-way streets with good reason. One-way street pairs reduce congestion. And as Mrs. Corling indicated, the one-way streets have been in existence since at least 1963. They were there for a reason at that point. And that reason continues today. And they're usually reserved for use when two-way streets don't work efficiently, also as Diane indicated. By reducing the residential parking rates, the ratios, more cars will find the street, adding to the congestion in similar ways as road closures and conversions to two-way traffic. The reason for such transportation changes to create more public open space is laudable, but the unintended result is a disaster for downtown. I would favor the establishment of a minimum of 10 to 15 percent pervious surface at ground level rather than green roofs or other road closures that will create more open space on public way, on all development sites to
create some open space. But that open space would not require any public maintenance resources because it would remain in private hands.

Fourth, the 265 respondents to the survey of new downtown residents is significant. The survey finding that nearly two-thirds of the respondents own zero or one household vehicles is impressive since the national average per the U.S. DOT is that 75 percent of households own at least as many cars as there are drivers. Evanstonians, even new residents, are doing something right. I would submit to you that this is already considered in the zoning parking ratios. Note that the survey respondents averaged 1.38 vehicles per household. That aside, now you take the average of what the current zoning required stall ration is for one and two-bedroom houses, one and two-bedroom units, and it yields an average of 1.25 plus 1.5. Low and behold, it's 1.38. This is exactly what was surveyed for the survey results from 265 respondents. That's powerful. The survey indicates that we are presently averaging those amounts, 1.38. And that matches the zoning and the actuality. It is a remarkable match. And I would recommend that there be no revision to the parking ratio.
almost on this basis alone. The windshield survey identified earlier indicates a range of ratios of .83 to 1.18 spaces per dwelling unit. This is wildly different from the 1.38 with the individual respondents. It's about a 30 percent swing. The wild variation invalidates further consideration of the windshield survey.

Six, a review of several U.S. Decennial Census results for Evanston suggests that there is some valuable insight into car ownership. Data on car ownership did not appear in a U.S. census until 1960, which basically coincides with the ongoing post-war market, housing market boom, population boom, and so on. At that very point and time Evanston's population peaked in 1970 at about 80,000 and has hovered in the range of 73 to 74,000 from 1980 through 2000. The total households have ranged from 25,800 in 1960 to 29,650 in the year 2000. So the number of households really hasn't increased that much. But we all know one thing: people are driving their cars more. And that's what the data suggests. They're making more trips, they're going to different destinations, and they need to be able to park those vehicles efficiently. And that's why we have
three large parking structures that are in use and fully
utilized.

Your consideration of the varied items
mentioned above would be appreciated. My evaluation
suggests that the current zoning ratios are doing a
fairly good job of replicating real parking and car
ownership downtown. And the windshield data and survey
work fall short of the necessary evidence to support any
changes in the zoning at this time. Similarly, street
closures and the creation of two-way streets are not
advised due to congestion implications that in turn will
hurt the economic engine and attractiveness of Evanston.
Finally, congestion will be compounded by the steady
increase that would be expected in the number of cars on
the street and the sure fire increase in the annual
vehicle miles driven. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: Sir, you're saying that
if the ratio is changed, if it is reduced, that that
will increase traffic on the street?

MR. BOVA: It probably will result in more
cars, more people deciding to place their cars on the
street. Right now there's an anomaly between the six
buildings that were windshield surveyed. The results
suggest .83 to 1.18. And the respondents are saying that they own in their households 1.83 vehicles. Where is the difference?

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: Is not a developer, though, going to make its own evaluation irrespective of what the City requires?

MR. BOVA: A, I don't know what you mean by that.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: Well, when a builder decides to put up a building, isn't he going to take into consideration how many parking spots are needed so the people that buy the units will have a place to park their car?

MR. BOVA: Generally developers will put in the minimum amount required under the Zoning Ordinance. You've seen that many times.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Next.

MS. FISKE: Hi. I'm Judy Fiske. I live at 2319 Sherman Avenue. And I also own a small independent retail store in the 1000 block of Davis Street in downtown Evanston and a store that we opened in April and I'm proud to say is doing quite nicely. We have 2,200-square feet, which is not a small store, not a
large store, but it works for us.

I just want to make a few comments. I've been sitting here tonight listening to what people have had to say. I agree with all of my fellow citizens who have expressed a real desire to see downtown really reflect the values of the community. And a lot of us have worked over many, many years on various land use issues, historic preservation issues basically from that same point of view. And if there's anything that we can thank the planned development process for in the past, it's getting citizens educated about zoning and other land use issues here in Evanston.

I grew up in Evanston. I was a little child in Evanston. I collect post cards on the history of Evanston. And I specialize in the downtown. Over my desk at home is a very large blow up of one of the Chandler's photographs of Fountain Square.

And I've thought about downtown Evanston over the years, not out of sentimentality, but out of what really has made downtown Evanston work and endure over many years with many different pressures put upon it, Old Orchard, of course, being one of them. The redevelopment of the Carlson Building. The building of
the Coss Building where a lot of our physicians moved
out of the Carlson Building. How Evanston really has
adapted to a lot of pressures over the years, but has
basically endured, I think is one of the things that was
mentioned in the 1989 plan that really reassured
residents of Evanston that our downtown was something
very special.

And you as Commissioners really represent more
than the City Council ever could do the opinions and the
points of view of the rest of your fellow citizens
because you're not political. And so as you've heard
people talk to you tonight, they're really asking you to
think about Evanston from the citizens' perspective.

Now that said, I want to say just a couple of
points because I don't want to rehash anything anyone
else has said here tonight. I do know when the streets
changed downtown Evanston from one-way to two-way
because I happen to have postcards from the same year
with postmarks on them. And one has two two-way streets
and one has one-way streets. And I want to ask you to
just not change the streets back to two-ways.

From my plate glass window on Davis Street I
overlook Braimer Animal Hospital and the liquor store,
the Hallmark shop, Turin Bicycle, I'm right next door to Audio Consultants, all of whom have big semi-trailer trucks coming. Now, we get deliveries also from out of state with semi-trailer trucks.

And as the police department tells our drivers, there's only one way in and one way out of downtown Evanston in a semi-trailer truck. And you can't, basically you can't get under the train tracks. So even though we're in a block where there are no national retail chains and almost every single store is a mom and pop, a privately owned store, and most of the buildings are owned by the people who own the stores, we still can't get semi-trailer trucks down there.

So what happens is that if they can't get down the alley, they really stop in the street. So we have two lanes of traffic going westbound on Davis Street. And one lane of that traffic really is for deliveries. And there are trucks there all the time.

Today I tried to keep an eye out the window as we were, as I had time. And at any time of the day there were at least three delivery trucks parked in the middle of David Street. And I have no problem with that. Because it still allows people to get in and
park. We're very lucky in our block on Davis Street that it really does turn over and parking isn't a problem. But it would be a problem if it were two-way. And that would cause a huge backup.

Now frankly, the only problem that I see in downtown is on two-way streets and especially that row of Benson where you have angled parking where people who have decided that they're going to park on the other side of the street then pull in the right-hand lane or as far over to the right-hand side. You have no idea what they're doing. They have their left-hand signal on. They're over in this lane. And you can't possibly pass them. It'll be an accident. So that, I think restriping of that kind of needs to be rethought.

A couple of other comments. I winced as a small business owner thinking that if I were located at a block that's east of the L tracks, that maybe someone might be thinking about putting my shop in an alley.

And I just think that if you, if any of you are familiar with the Kellogg study where Kellogg students a few years back really surveyed the downtown, talked to people who were shopping in the downtown, and came to the conclusion that people who support and shop in the
downtown are supporting local businesses. They’re coming here for the local restaurants. They’re coming here for the small local businesses that you can’t find anywhere else where the level of customer service is extraordinarily high and where people have thought of the products that are going to appeal to the people in the community.

I’m going to argue with you that it is the small local businesses that in fact support the large national retail chains. And therefore I’m going to argue with you that the block, the Fountain Square block, that triangle block, which I have testified previously, is the only block in downtown Evanston that’s totally ringed by retail, should remain a traditional local retail, as much as possible, block. Because I think that sets the tone and the character of the community. That’s why people really come here. Even people who live in the high-rises come here for the charm and character of Evanston. And I think that’s the only way that we can really support that.

So I’d prefer to see, if you really do have to go to extraordinary heights in the City, not to do it on that block. Because I think you’d be throwing the baby
out with the bath water. I would hate to see that.

After years and years of marveling at the resilience of our community, I would just hate to see you toss that out.

I also support the idea of office space because it, we can use off-street, I mean, off-site parking. One of the things that kills, absolutely kills retail, is when you have a building then suddenly the flow of the street is interrupted by, as someone mentioned, dead space or accessed parking garages. You destroy that continuity in the same manner that I think Jeff Smith mentioned, that the entire corner of where the Chase National Bank building was destroyed when that building was built. And the continuity of downtown also went with it.

So that's what I have to say tonight. Thank you very much. Thank you for your service. And thank all of my fellow citizens for a great job.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: Judy, would you not favor a 20-story office building on the Fountain Square block?

MS. FISKE: No, I wouldn't.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: Okay.
CHAIRMAN WOODS: Okay, that I guess concludes downtown core discussion. The next segment of things would be open discussion. And since we are out of time this evening, we need to continue that. And I am going to propose some dates. And the Commission needs to weigh in on this.

I know that, Dennis, there's some issues of timing relative to the moratorium, things like that.

COMMISSIONER SCHULDENFREI: Yes, could we have a quote from staff about the moratorium? If the City Council doesn't extend the downtown moratorium past --

CHAIRMAN WOODS: They extended it by two days.

COMMISSIONER SCHULDENFREI: -- past December 11th or 12th, what is the impact for development if someone puts in a zoning analysis or something? What will happen? Will we then evaluate that proposal on the old rules if they get it in?

MR. MARINO: It's based on the existing Zoning Ordinance that would be evaluated.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: And to some degree that'll be true even after our master plan is passed.

MR. MARINO: That's correct. Until the Zoning Ordinance itself is amended.
CHAIRMAN WOODS: So anyway, December, let's see, December, no, December 25th, no. 18th, 19th, 20th?
Yes, Dennis?

MR. MARINO: I'd be a little concerned going that late in December in terms of getting a quorum on people leaving town. I like the spirit of trying to do this in December, certainly maybe earlier in the month.

COMMISSIONER NYDEN: What about that day that we were going to do a joint meeting, but then we --

CHAIRMAN WOODS: I'm not available.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: Mr. Chairman, is there any point at all in sending this back to Committee?

COMMISSIONER SCHULDENFREI: Or back to the consultants.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: I think we need to finish what we started and then decide what we're going to do.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: I mean, there's a lot on our plate here and a lot of issues that have been --

COMMISSIONER NYDEN: Or what about doing this like the Lake Front plan got? I mean, they had, I don't, I just don't know why we, why we did so many meetings for the Lake Front plan and now the central part of our City is only getting a couple meetings.
COMMISSIONER SCHULDENFREI: And no community meetings whatsoever. So we could have a few community meetings over a period of time that would reflect these changes and other public comments.

MR. MARINO: As was stated earlier, we've had many community meetings, a charrette that was a week long. We've had two four-hour sessions here. And you know, I think you're looking for a date for another session here.

The recommended plan is in front of the Plan Commission. Your role is to make a recommendation to the Planning and Development Committee.

COMMISSIONER SCHULDENFREI: It's a draft plan, not a recommended plan, yes?

MR. MARINO: Yes. It is a draft plan. But I recommend it. Basically the consultants have moved it forward.

And the process is that you consider the plan, you then make commentary and a recommendation to the Planning and Development Committee.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: December 4th, 5th, 6th? No, 4th, 6th, 5th, we have a meeting already.

COMMISSIONER BURRUS: Jim, we're able to
modify the, I mean, clearly this plan can't go forward.
I mean, it's, there are just so many inconsistencies
and things that the citizens have brought up and things
that we're concerned about. So we can modify the plan
as a Planning Commission and ask the consultant to
change and then for that plan to City Council. Am I
correct in that assumption?

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Would. But we need to still
comment as a group.

COMMISSIONER BURRUS: No. I'm not disagreeing
with that. I'm just throwing out that we don't
necessarily, what we have in front of us isn't set in
stone that we have to vote yes or no on this. We can
say, we need changes made to this, is my question.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Well, I think that would be
the subject of Planning Commission deliberation and
discussion and --

COMMISSIONER BURRUS: Fabulous. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: But I'm still looking for a
date that we can continue to. So, --

COMMISSIONER BURRUS: I thought you were
married.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: I am.
COMMISSIONER BURRUS: Okay.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: 4th, 6th.

COMMISSIONER STALEY: Are we meeting on the 5th already? Or, I didn't --

CHAIRMAN WOODS: We are, well, the Zoning Committee is meeting on the 5th relative to West Evanston. Well, I personally, it's immaterial to me at this point. I mean, one thing that people have to understand from my perspective is evening meetings are sort of my life, whether it's here or whether it's what I do professionally. So --

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: The 4th is a problem for me. I could do it on the 6th, which is a Thursday. What?

COMMISSIONER WIDMAYER: A Rotary fund raiser.

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: A Rotary fund raiser --

COMMISSIONER WIDMAYER: It's a citizenship thing.

MR. MARINO: Jim, could it be done after the Zoning Committee on the 5th?

COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: That's West Evanston.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: The Zoning Committee's going to go --
COMMISSIONER OPDYCKE: That's going to go for hours, don't you think?

CHAIRMAN WOODS: It's West Evanston, so I'm not sure where we're at with that.

MR. MARINO: Okay.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: I mean, I suppose, I mean, I suppose that we could say that the Zoning Committee will end at nine o'clock and then continue until 11, but --

MR. MARINO: That's kind of late.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Yes, I know. I understand.

COMMISSIONER: Well, what about the 19th?

COMMISSIONER: What day is that of the week?

COMMISSIONER: I can do that.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: 6th, 13th, 19th?

COMMISSIONERS: 19th.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: 19th. Okay, 19th at seven o'clock.

MR. MARINO: If I could just ask, Kirk Bishop, are you available on the 19th?

MR. BISHOP: We are.

MR. MARINO: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Cross that date out for late Christmas shopping.
MR. BISHOP: Seven on the 19th?

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Seven on the 19th.

MR. BISHOP: And that would be for the Plan Commissioners to get a chance to discuss this part by part, piece by piece, section by section?

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Yes.

MR. BISHOP: Okay. So we have plenty of time to get through it?

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Can I have motion to adjourn?

COMMISSIONER BURRUS: Motion to adjourn.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Second?

COMMISSIONER SCHULDENFREI: Second.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: All in favor?

COMMISSIONERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN WOODS: Done.

(Whereupon, the hearing on the above-titled cause was concluded at 11:12 p.m.)