

**Planning & Development Committee
Minutes of January 28, 2008
Council Chambers – 6:30 p.m.
Evanston Civic Center**

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

Alderman Absent: M. Wynne

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

Presiding Official: Alderman Hansen

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Hansen called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 14, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

Ald. Moran moved approval of the January 14, 2008 meeting minutes, seconded by Ald. Tisdahl. The minutes were approved with a vote of 8-0.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

(P1) Ordinance 5-O-08 – Central Street Plan Implementation – Text Amendment

(P2) Ordinance 6-O-08 – Central Street Plan Implementation – Map Amendment

Chair Hansen gave an update from where they left off at the last meeting on January 14th. She reminded that this zoning issue involving the property at 1620 Central has nothing to do with the PACE Program itself or its operation. She will allow citizen comments regarding the PACE Program but will give more consideration to comments made on the zoning issues regarding the Central Street Plan.

Citizen Comments

Susan Yount, 1624 Central Street – spoke on behalf of 9 town homes surrounding 1620 Central. Concern for property de-value with students living there.

Kathleen Ward, 1604 Central – said that she is the President of her Condo Association and represents all 6-units. Concerns for property being taken off tax roll.

Ken Bailey, 1602 Central represents many property owners surrounding the 1620 Central location. They strongly feel that if the zoning for this property was not in the Plan that was finalized on December 6, 2007, then it should not be in the Plan presented for Council approval. Therefore, they request a text amendment to eliminate “Additional Permitted uses (A) and Additional Special Uses (B) for Sub area 3 contained in Table 1: Additional Uses. Read from prepared statement available in Community Development Administration Office). Mr. Bailey

also presented the Committee with a folder full of letters from several Central Street property neighborhood property owners supporting this request for the text amendment.

Joe Beaulieu, 2530 Ashland Avenue said his property directly abuts the 1620 Central property. He appreciates Mr. Lawler's representation of the PACE Program and their proposal for said property and also realizes that a worse scenario could go there with a much more detrimental use to the surrounding properties. However, dormitory use was not left out of the O1 Zoning District by mistake; it should not be an allowed use in this district. He also argues that proper notification was not given for this change in text amendment to the Central Street Master Plan.

Jacqui Black, 1626B Central – agrees with all comments made in opposition of the proposed dormitory use. 1620 Central Street building has always been an office building and use for over the past 20 years and should remain with that use. She expressed concerns that the current uses on the alley produce heavy traffic and a dormitory use will only worsen that effect.

John Walsh, 2730 Hartzell, Vice President of the Central Street Neighbor's. He supports the Ordinance this evening for the Central Street Corridor Overlay District and Zoning Map Amendment. He urges passage of these ordinances with or without the dormitory uses. He does not want to see the moratoriums extended any more time.

Andrew Ludington feels the amendment made after the Plan was presented in its final draft, is a misuse of zoning. Agrees that PACE Program and students would probably be good neighbors, but this is not the issue here. Any dormitory use of the 1620 Central site would be inappropriate.

George Ritzlin, 1937 Central, owns a retail store at this location. He supports the passage of Ordinance's 5 & 6 to move forward with the implementation of the Central Street Master Plan. He noted that most of the sales for his store are from outside Evanston clients, therefore he would like to see the streetscape improvements made in accordance with the Plan. He read from a prepared statement.

(Representatives for PACE Program or speaking on behalf of the PACE Program)

Mr. Jack Lawler, Legal representative for National Louis University and PACE Program. He is also an Evanston resident. He gave background on the PACE Program and its 21-year history.

Also present on behalf of PACE Program: Carol Burns, Specialist for PACE Program, Bill Roberts, Facilities Management for National Louis Univ., Patrick Hughes – Activist in support of PACE students and graduates, Students: Nat Smith and Courtney Larimer, Graduate: Ira Mitchell.

Mr. Lawler explained the proposal for the dormitory use of 1620 Central Street.

Richard Fleeer, Southeast Evanston resident – said he is in favor of and supports the PACE Program and dormitory use for the 1620 Central property. He spoke of change in all municipalities and cities. He feels Evanston is unique; the location would be convenient for PACE students that use public transportation. He stressed that with change comes new cars, sometimes more cars, new people, and some noise even. He feels this is all part of City living and should be expected. Does not mean they will be bad neighbors or can not work something out that would be suitable for all involved.

Pat Hughes, 1317 Livingston – spoke in support of PACE Program, its students and graduates. A graduate has become one of his best friends over the years. He feels it is important of the fact of who would be occupying the 1620 Central Street building as a dormitory use. He has the utmost confidence in the staff they runs the PACE Program and the conduct of these students and that they would be a very good asset to the neighborhood.

End Citizen Comments

Mr. Dunkley reminded the Committee that whether the dormitory use is included as a Special Use or not, it will still require a zoning application and the process following with public notification, hearings and on to Council for final approval. It still remains up to the Council's discretion of what is allowed in the Zoning District. Several Committee members questions why this was not done during from the beginning. Mr. Dunkley said that several changes were made over the time from the beginning of implementation and the first draft up until the final draft presented December 6, 2007. Ald. Jean-Baptiste asked when this dormitory use and proposal for this property came about. Mr. Dunkley responded that a consultation with the Alderman of the ward occurred followed by the recommended change for that Sub area.

Ald. Rainey believes all the opposition has everything to do with the PACE Program. She said it has been testified from a previous meeting that the property is under contract therefore the zoning for this parcel is probably crucial for the purchase agreement. If this contract does not go through and the PACE Program does not purchase the property, there would be nothing to prevent another institution use to go there.

Ald. Wollin pointed out that it seems like the building has been vacant for some time now. The building is equipped with a huge parking lot behind the building, therefore it would be ideal for another office use to locate there. Ald. Tisdahl stated that she has discussed payment-in-lieu of taxes with National Louis University if they were to purchase the building, however NLU representatives said this would not be possible.

Mr. Dunkley reiterated that Council does not have to grant any special uses, which goes for National Louis's interest in the building as a dormitory use. Therefore, he again underscored that whether this use is added as a special uses or not, it should not effect moving forward with this ordinance as presented. Mr. Wolinski added that a Master Plan is actually a model of concepts for a specific area and the zoning aspect is an enforcement tool for that Plan. He clarified the process and that it is not unusually throughout for new ideas and concepts to be throne in all the way up to the "11th hour".

Ald. Bernstein moved to approve Ordinance 5-O-08 for the Central Street Plan Implementation – Text Amendment, seconded by Ald. Tisdahl. The vote was 8-0 in favor of the motion.

Ald. Bernstein moved to approve Ordinance 6-O-08 for the Central Street Plan Implementation – Map Amendment, seconded by Ald. Tisdahl. The vote was 8-0 in favor of the motion.

(P4) Ordinance 16-O-08 – Extending the Moratorium on the Issuance of Building Permits for new construction on Central from Ashland to 2200 Central
THIS ITEM WAS WITHDRAWN.

(P5) Ordinance 17-O-08 – Extending the Moratorium on the Issuance of Building Permits for new construction on Central from Green Bay Road from Isabella to Lincoln
THIS ITEM WAS WITHDRAWN.

(P3) Request for \$300,000 in HOME Funds – Grant for Three Affordable Condominium Ownership Units – 241 Callan Avenue

It was first noted that the Housing commission recommends funding of \$250,000 rather than the \$300,000 being requested by the applicant. Ald. Rainey stated her opposition to this project. She is appalled that they are being asked to fund \$300,000 to provide assistance to provide 3-units of affordable housing out of a 5-unit building. On top of that, these proposed units are only 950 square feet. She underscored that this is not an affordable housing project. There are still many condominium units on the market that the City has funded for affordable pricing to qualified buyers and they still remain empty. She feels this project would only add to this problem, especially with the price the applicant is proposing to list for affordable purchase. She reiterated that this is an inefficient and uneconomical project.

Ald. Rainey continued by pointed out two buildings in the same area that the City has funded for affordable housing projects; 620 Mulford and 737 Brummel. In the Mulford building she has been told that units were under contract but no closings have occurred and the units still remain empty. She pointed out that 241 Callan is right around the corner from 620 Mulford, which makes no logical sense to have that many available affordable housing units for sale. Ald. Rainey is also against only having affordable housing units available to purchase in specified areas and buildings. In her opinion, those that qualify to purchase affordable housing should have the freedom of choice in locations and neighborhoods throughout the City of Evanston. This is why she is in favor of subsidizing the family instead of the developer to build affordable housing in only certain areas of town.

Mr. Neil Davidson gave the Committee some background information on his project. He started the project back in September, 2007 with the demolition and gutting of the interior of the building. His bank gave him a mandate to sell 2 units at market price which he had done with 2 buyers under contract. He noted that the City is requiring him to put in the fire suppressant system that he was told only needed for buildings of 6 units or more, however no he has been told by staff that requirements are for 3 units or more. He insisted that staff told him back in September that they supported this project so he went forward because of this reassurance. Mr. Wolinski clarified that what was presented to staff by Mr. Davidson at that time did seem doable, however the proposal presented to the Housing Commission and before the Committee this evening, was not supported by staff.

Ald. Moran moved to amend the request from \$300,000 to \$275,000, seconded by Ald. Jean-Baptiste. This motion was not supported. Ald. Rainey reiterated her strong opposition to this project or any other affordable housing project in that immediate vicinity. There is already an overabundance of affordable units still available for purchase. She pointed out that the applicant has testified that he has two units for market price under currently under contract. Therefore maybe he can sell the other 3 at market price, including the one in the basement.

Ald. Jean-Baptiste moved to hold this item in Committee to allow the applicant to come back with better figures, seconded by Ald. Wollin. The motion was approved.

Ald. Rainey requested that any realtors present or who read about this issue, please get in touch with her. She would like to see a list of available units in Evanston in the price range of \$285,000 with 2 bedrooms/2 baths.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline E. Brownlee