

**Planning & Development Committee Meeting
Minutes of March 10, 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 (via telephone), M. Wynne

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

Presiding Official: Alderman Holmes

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Holmes called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. She announced a change in the order of agenda in effort to attempt getting through all the items before the Committee this evening. She noted that only the presentation from the developers for 708 Church Street would be heard tonight leaving all citizen comments and Committee discussion for the special meeting scheduled next Monday, March 17, 2007.

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 25, 2008

Ald. Wynne moved approval of the March 25th minutes, seconded by Ald. Tisdahl. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

(P4) Recommendation to Reserve \$800,000 in HOME Funds for Four Community Housing Development Organizations to Apply to Projects in the Next Two Years in Order to prevent Loss of Funds

Mr. Wolinski informed the Committee that staff has held several discussions with HUD representatives who have directed that these funds need to be reserved in order not to lose them by March 31, 2008. In order to comply with HUD changes regarding commitment regulations, the City must reserve these funds to be used within the next two years. He noted that the CHDO reservations must be made by March 31, 2008 in order to meet HUD commitment deadlines; however the City will still need to approve the use of the reserved funds for any specific projects.

Ald. Moran moved approval, seconded by Ald. Tisdahl. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

(P3) Approval of up to \$3,000 for Two Condominium Workshops for Evanston Condominium Owners

Ald. Moran moved approval, seconded by Ald. Wynne.

Ald. Rainey said she supports these seminars and feels they are very important for condominium ownership. However, these seminars are being offered free and she suggests that there be some type of fee charged for attendees, maybe per condo association. She stated this would be a small cost to pay for such important and valuable information to help the condo owner. Ald. Bernstein agreed. Ald. Wynne also agreed and feels attendees will be willing to pay for what you gain in attending these workshops.

In response to a question from Ald. Hansen, staff informed that they sought out Lakeside Community Development Corporation to conduct these seminars. Ald. Hansen suggested that Co-op ownership buildings be included to participate in these seminars and requested that staff look into this.

Ald. Rainey moved to include charging a fee of \$15 per association or attendee for these seminars. Ald. Jean-Baptiste seconded the motion. The vote was 8 in favor of the motion and 1 voting nay (Moran).

On the original motion, the vote was 9-0 in favor.

(P2) Request for \$250,000 in HOME Funds – Grant for Three Affordable Condominium Ownership Units – 241 Callan Avenue

Ald. Moran moved approval, seconded by Ald. Wynne.

Mr. Steve Engelman, Attorney for the applicant Neil Davidson, addressed the Committee. He noted that since the last meeting this item was before P&D, Mr. Davidson has amended his proposal to address some of the concerns expressed by the Committee. The selling price for the affordable units has been lowered from \$195,000 and \$185,000 to \$166,666 with certain original amenities offered being reduced or eliminated. Mr. Engelman asked the Committee to acknowledge Mr. Davidson's history in developing decent affordable housing and providing the opportunity for homeownership in Evanston for low to moderate income families. He further noted that Mr. Davidson's contribution to the affordable housing stock should be commended and supported by City Council.

Ald. Rainey again reiterated her opposition for this proposed project which extends beyond just the pricing of these units. However, with regards to the asking price of the units as affordable housing, she pointed out they are only 950 square feet with no eat-in kitchen or separate dining room; offering no real quality living space. In addition, specific amenities have been taken away such as the granite counter tops to a lesser quality flooring, lesser quality cabinets and appliances; all to compensate the developer's reduction in the asking price. Ald. Rainey stressed the point that these units are already substandard in size and offer no real benefit to purchase when you look at the location, the existing building which is nothing special and the fact that it is a rehab project and not new construction like his most recent affordable housing developments, which offered a lot more than these substandard units for practically the same asking price.

Ald. Rainey reminded the Committee of the fact that within the same block, there is the 602 Mulford building which the City also subsidized and none of the units have been closed to this date. She further recalled that the City subsidy for 602 Mulford was \$686,000 and all 12 units have been vacant for quite some time now. Again, she stressed her point that it is not economically feasible or reasonable to the City to subsidize this proposed project at this location with two completed affordable housing projects within blocks of each other and all vacant. In addition, the funds being requested per unit are paying for the entire rehab job and offer very little for the asking price, even at \$166,666. She feels this is not affordable housing. Ald. Rainey pleaded for the Committee members to consider her strong opposition on this project and not to support this proposal. She stated that her Ward does not need any more affordable housing projects especially since the existing ones are still vacant and having trouble finding suitable buyers and selling the units.

Ald. Moran expressed his support for funding this project, especially in consideration of Mr. Davidson's notable reputation in providing, marketing and selling all of his affordable housing projects in Evanston. He feels the Committee should support the small number of not-for-profit and even for-profit developers that make the effort to build affordable housing, regardless of the location. Ald. Rainey responded that there are already too many affordable housing projects in her Ward, within close proximity that are not sold and have remained vacant for a period of time. It does not make sense to approve yet an additional project in the same area. She reiterated her opinion why affordable housing funds should go to the individual families that qualify; allowing them the opportunity to find and choose where they purchase property throughout Evanston. She strongly feels it is unfair to only offer affordable housing at specific locations when there are so many other condominium units on the market throughout Evanston that are being sold at affordable prices, especially if it is subsidized.

Ald. Wynne agreed with Ald. Rainey's comments. She informed that Committee of her discussion she has had with Reba Place representatives who expressed that they would not go the same route in developing affordable housing as they did with 602 Mulford.

Mr. Engelman again pointed out that Mr. Davidson has a good track record in marketing and offering assistance to qualifying buyers in purchasing his affordable housing units. He has also sold all of his units in a timely period. Ald. Rainey responded that if this developer's track record is so good and he has indicated having contracts on the market value units, then he should have no problem in selling all the units for market value. She stressed that this is not the right time to fund such a project that offers no justification to being feasible affordable housing with the market struggling at the current time.

Ald. Tisdahl said that she would support this request but would like to see any further proposals for affordable housing in other locations throughout Evanston besides the specific areas most are currently offered. She would like to see and supports having a proposal in her Ward in the future.

With no further discussion, the vote was 5 in favor of the motion (Wollin, Jean-Baptiste, Holmes, Moran, Tisdahl) and 4 voting nay (Wynne, Bernstein, Rainey, Hansen). Motion passed.

(P1) Ordinance 32-O-08 – Plan Commission Recommendation for a Map Amendment & Planned Development at 708 Church Street

A presentation from the development team was given with Mr. Tim Anderson opening comment and introducing the team members. He acknowledged the representatives from Klutznick-Fisher; Mr. James Klutznick and Maury Fisher, Mr. Steve Friedland, Attorney for the developer, Mr. Larry Booth and other associates from Booth Hansen Architects, representatives from their landscaping Firm and Mr. Eric Russell from KLOA.

Mr. Larry Booth proceeded with the power-point presentation. He detailed the actual design of the project, showed several views from different locations surrounding the site, several different angles of the proposed building, and the landscaping plans for specific floors, explained the restoration of the existing Hahn Building, and demonstrated wind diagrams and shadow studies. Mr. Eric Russell, principal of KLOA, gave an overview of the traffic study done for peak hours. (A copy of the power-point slides for this presentation is available in the City of Evanston, Community Development Department.)

In summary, the proposal is to construct a 49-story residential tower with the following characteristics: a maximum of 218 dwelling units, approximately 28,650 square feet of retail and office space, a gross floor area of approximately 457,752 square feet resulting in a floor area ratio of 15.77, a maximum building height of 523 feet, and approximately 234 off-street parking spaces. Mr. Steve Friedland, Legal representative for the development team, concluded with the public benefits proposed including: TIF increments, preservation of the historic Hahn Building, inclusionary housing contributions, Silver LEED Certification, enhancement of retail core, opportunity to redevelop Fountain Square and architectural quality. He also noted that the developer has agreed to the Plan Commission's conditions as stated under Section 7 of the Ordinance.

This concluded the developer's presentation. Chair Holmes said that this item will be continued next Monday, March 17th, at the Special Planning & Development Committee meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. She will begin the meeting with citizen comments.

(P5) Ordinance 39-O-08 – Plan Commission Recommendation for a Planned Development at 318-320 Dempster Street

Ald. Wynne moved approval, seconded by Ald. Tisdahl.

Ms. Anne Earl gave a presentation on the history of this building which is originally an 1890's barn. She noted that there are approximately 60 barns in Evanston, the majority being in the Lake Front area. She said that this particular barn is very unique with its 7 small squared windows which means the barn housed up to 7 horses. She went into more detail on this particular barn and the historical significance as well as other barns throughout Evanston. She supports the proposed development for this building and urges the Committee's support as well.

Ald. Wynne expressed her approval of this project and that she is very much in favor of the proposed planned development and use of this building. Chair Holmes noted that she was in attendance at the Plan Commission meeting for this project and agrees with Ald. Wynne's opinion.

The vote was 9-0 in favor of the motion.

(P6) Ordinance 42-O-08 – Registration of Rental Dwelling Unit Buildings

Mr. Wolinski recalled at the last meeting, lengthy discussion of the possibility of licensing which the Committee and majority of attendees were against. However, there was support vocalized for the registration of rental buildings and units. The proposal before the Committee this evening is a fee of \$50 per building, per year due annual around the 1st of the year. There would be a 50% discount for senior citizens living in their rental building, with the same qualifications required for the Circuit Breaker program. Mr. Wolinski said that staff supports this Ordinance as presented.

Ald. Wynne moved approval, seconded by Ald. Tisdahl.

There was discussion regarding amending the ordinance to charge half the proposed fee if the building is under 6-units. Ald. Rainey suggested that they require the property owner to provide property insurance information with the registration. Many citizens in the audience were against providing this information to the City feeling their constitutional rights being invaded with too much information. Ald. Wynne would like staff to provide information on the number of building with 6-units or less. Mr. Janusz responded that building with 6-10 units there are 114

buildings, 2-units approximately 1700 buildings, and 3-units approximately 400 buildings. Chair Holmes said that she is concerned with condo rentals being looked over; they should be required to register their units as well and pay the fee. Staff will look into ways to locate condo rental units.

The vote was 8 in favor and 1 voting nay (Hansen).

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline E. Brownlee