MEETING MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
Wednesday, January 11, 2017
7:00 P.M.
Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, James C. Lytle Council Chambers

Members Present: Jim Ford (Chair), Simon Belisle, Terri Dubin, Carol Goddard, Colby Lewis, Jolene Saul

Members Absent: Patrick Brown, Andrew Pigozzi, Peter Isaac

Associate Members Present: none

Associate Members Absent: Scott Peters

Staff Present: Meagan Jones, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner
Scott Mangum, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Presiding Member: Jim Ford, Chairman

1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM
Chairman Ford called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M. and introduced Jolene Saul, who was recently appointed to the Plan Commission.

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: December 14, 2016
Chair Ford requested a change to the minutes reflecting the Associate Member, Scott Peters being voted to maintain that position. Commissioner Goddard made a motion to approve the minutes from December 14, 2016 with the suggested change. Commissioner Dubin seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved, 5-0, with one abstention.

3. OLD BUSINESS
Chairman Ford explained that the agenda item for old business is a continuation from the December Plan Commission meeting.

A. NORTH DOWNTOWN PLANNING
The City of Evanston proposes to amend the Downtown Plan to expand its boundaries by including an area roughly between Emerson Street to the south, Foster Street CTA Station to the north, the first north/south alley west of Sherman Avenue to the east, Maple Avenue to the west and properties on the north side of Emerson Street between Maple Avenue and Ridge Avenue. The plan amendment is intended to help guide future development in this area north of downtown.
Ms. Jones presented an overview of the revisions made to the plan amendment, including further explanation regarding the determination of subarea boundaries and preferred development, the addition maps and an implementation section and other minor corrections. The staff recommendation to amend the 2009 Downtown Plan to expand its boundaries to include 5 new subareas north of downtown is unchanged. Ms. Jones then reviewed the subareas and the preferred uses, density and building design and materials that would be preferred for new development.

Chair Ford opened the hearing to Commissioner questions and comments. Questions and comments included:

- The future of the Foster Street CTA station
- Clarification on the changes made (substantive versus language and description).
- Concerns of the height proposed at each of the corners of the intersection of Maple Avenue and Foster Street.
- Consideration of pedestrian changes to the area near the Foster Street Station

Chair Ford opened the hearing to questions and comments from the public. Four members of the public spoke. General questions and comments included:

- Defining “contemporary” building design and how future development would fit within existing development;
- Intentions for zoning district regulations within the area in the future.
- Possible projects that may be permitted or proposed within these subareas.

Ms. Jones responded to these discussion items, clarifying revisions made to the proposed amendment and emphasizing that the proposed plan does not propose zoning changes. She gave some examples of development that could take place and indicated that those developments would go through several levels of review. Staff then stated that, at this time, the Foster Street CTA station will remain open despite some discussion indicating otherwise.

The Commission began their deliberation with additional discussion centered on development near the intersection of Maple Avenue and Foster Street. Examples of other commercial areas such as Central Street and the west end of Davis Street were discussed as points of reference for height and density. Comments were made about the need for a continuous storefront along these streets and to emphasize the importance of the Northwestern University parking lot site. It was suggested that more language be added to this point as well as the need for small neighborhood scale development along both sides of Maple Avenue and Foster Streets.

Commissioner Goddard then made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed plan amendment to City Council with the suggested revisions. Commissioner Lewis seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously 6-0.
4. PUBLIC COMMENT

A resident gave some background information regarding past plans for Northwestern University’s surface parking lot at Foster Street and Maple Avenue which were tabled some time ago.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Dubin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Saul seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved by voice call 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Meagan Jones
Neighborhood and Land Use Planner
Community Development Department