Planning & Development Committee Meeting
Minutes of April 17, 2017
7:15 p.m.
James C. Lytle Council Chambers - Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center


STAFF PRESENT:      S. Mangum

OTHERS PRESENT:

PRESIDING OFFICIAL: Ald. Revelle

I. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF QUORUM: ALDERMAN REVELLE, CHAIR
   A quorum being present, Ald. Revelle called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 27, 2017
    Ald. Fiske moved to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2017 meeting, seconded by Ald. Tendam.

    The committee voted unanimously 6-0, with one abstention, to approve the March 27, 2017 minutes (Ald. Wilson abstained).

III. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION
    (P1) Resolution 19-R-17, Authorizing the City Manager to Sign a Disconnection Petition for City Property to be Removed from Skokie Park District Territory
    Staff recommends that City Council approve Resolution 19-R-17 authorizing City participation in the disconnection petition circulated by private property owners in Evanston from the Skokie Park District.
    For Action

    Ald. Tendam stated that the residents were under the understanding that there was an Evanston Park District, and that they were members of one park district over the other. However, in reality residents are being double taxed, paying taxes on Skokie Park District and then paying for City of Evanston parks. Dissolving this is the right thing to do, and I think the Skokie Park District is agreeable to this as they realize the unfairness of this.

    Ald. Revelle said that the City of Evanston owns several parcels in this area, so this resolution would join the City in the petition with residents.

    Ald. Rainey asked whether the only implication for City of Evanston is that this Resolution removes the park boundaries that intrude into Evanston. Ald. Revelle confirmed, stating that Resolution 19-R-17 acknowledges that
residents are already a part of the City of Evanston Park District, and would no longer be a part of the Skokie Park District.

Ald. Tendam moved to approve Resolution 19-R-17, seconded by Ald. Rainey. The Committee voted unanimously, 7-0, to approve Resolution 19-R-17.

(P2) Resolution 27-R-17, Adopting an Amendment to the Downtown Plan to Add Additional Property Subject to the Downtown Plan to Guide Future Land Use Decisions and Planning

Plan Commission and staff recommend adoption of Resolution 27-R-17 amending the 2009 Downtown Plan to add five new subareas covering the geographic 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.

For Action

Ald. Holmes moved to approve 27-R-17, seconded by Ald. Wynne.

Mr. Mangum provided staff PowerPoint presentation on Resolution 27-R-17. This item has appeared before Planning & Development Commission three times (February, April, and September 2016), featured community meetings in May and June of 2016, discussion with property owners, and received Draft Plan Amendment Overview and Plan Commission Hearing and Recommendations prior to Resolution 27-R-17.

Tina Paden, Resident, owns three properties on Emerson Street and was shocked to learn at January meeting that those properties were included in this plan. They did not receive communication about the proposed plan. Ms. Paden noted that the properties are in the middle of the block. Ms. Paden also raised concerns about eminent domain, since their primary residence is the only property on the block. Ms. Paden recommended that the Committee approve the Resolution while excluding these properties from the plan boundary.

Priscilla Niles, Resident, voiced opposition about downtown developers and raised concerns about downtown rents, noting that downtown businesses only operate for a short time.

Bradford H. Brown, Resident, seconded Ms. Paden, stating that their opinion was not sought on this Resolution, and that they do not wish eminent domain to apply to their properties.

Ald. Rainey asked Mr. Brown to clarify the relationship between this plan and condemnation. Mr. Brown answered that as a property owner, they would only like to sell only if they receive adequate compensation to replicate current investment. Mr. Brown is concerned that with this motion, the City
could take property and undercompensate. Ald. Rainey stated that City of Evanston is not buying property in this area. Ald. Rainey stated that the City of Evanston does not have the ability to force a resident to sell property to a private resident. There is no ability to invoke eminent domain.

Ald. Fiske stated that when this discussion began, it was focused on the block bounded by Maple, Sherman, Emerson, and Foster, and it started to expand west, and does not agree with part of this expansion. Ald. Fiske is opposed to crossing Foster Street with this boundary, since the same problem faced by the Plan Commission during the 831 Emerson Planned Development will occur, and that the Plan Commission will have to ask where downtown ends. Foster Street is part of a charming district full of homes, commercial uses, and some taller buildings thrown in, but I am sure that going down the road the same issue with the border of downtown would occur. Ald. Fiske supported Ms. Paden’s recommendation. Ald. Fiske would rather return to the original thought about the Maple, Sherman, Emerson, and Foster border.

Ald. Wilson agreed that there is no purpose for eminent domain here. This is an attempt to plan what private people will do. Ald. Wilson noted that this is a planning measure, and that the zoning is not changing, and that a zoning change would be much more permanent and significant.

Ald. Holmes stated that Mr. Mangum did a good job summarizing neighborhood meetings, which were an important part of the planning process. Ald. Holmes noted that there are concerns about more affordable housing, and that this planning process helped to raise some of these issues in the proposed Resolution area. This is a planning process, and not a proposal for the City to develop this area. Ms. Holmes never heard anyone give the illusion that the City was using this process to develop this area.

Ald. Fiske raised a concern about the forthcoming requirement for Northwestern University sophomores to live on campus, and its impact on this area of the City.

Ald. Revelle asked staff to speak about recommendations, including a recommendation to revise the 2009 Plan to be consistent with current development.

City Manager, Wally Bobkiewicz, echoed Ald. Fiske’s comment, stating that with Northwestern University freshmen and sophomores living on campus, the development pressure on this neighborhood without any plan will jeopardize community involvement and City involvement in this area. As we look at short term and long term recommendations, it will be a fluid plan, and we will need to live with the plan for a while to understand the direction the City is headed. The larger questions will be ones that the new City Council will take on in coming years, but that this Resolution lays the groundwork for those efforts.
Ald. Wynne said that it is important to put this Resolution in place to send a signal as to what we would like to do in this area. The understanding was that when the Council passed the Plan that the zoning would follow. Zoning changes to codify the Plan have not yet occurred, sending a mixed message.

**Ald. Fiske moved to amend the plan by limiting the subject area to that area bounded by Emerson to Foster, and Sherman (from the west alley) to Maple.**

Ald. Wynne stated that the community attended meetings based on the planning area as defined by the Resolution, and that the community has had a serious discussion about this. Ald. Wynne understands the issue of a downtown boundary, but reads the Resolution as creating a transition zone so that there is not a battle between downtown and other uses.

Ald. Rainey asked Ald. Fiske to clarify the specific amended area. Ald. Revelle noted that this proposed amendment would remove the area North of Foster and West of Maple from the proposed Resolution. Ald. Rainey said that they can understand why there are fears from individual property owners.

**Ald. Rainey seconded Ald. Fiske’s proposed amendment.**

Ald. Rainey stated that the only reason properties West of Maple would be included in this proposed Resolution is their potential for larger development, and so it is understandable that some residents are opposed.

Neighborhood and Land Use Planner, Meagan Jones, described the community involvement in the planning process. The community meetings included a number of different maps where residents could draw in proposed borders for this area. Staff used those maps, along with sites that have been researched for potential development, and zoning to create the boundaries that are proposed in the Resolution. These boundaries were presented at the September 2016 meeting as staff sought a recommendation to move forward and draft the plan.

Ald. Fiske reiterated opposition to crossing Foster Street with this border, and stated a specific motive to preserve affordable homes in that area. Ald. Holmes stated that with the proposed amendment, there is no way to expand for development. Ald. Holmes stated that this is not the intent of the plan, and that there was real deep discussion about development in this area during the community process.

**Ald. Wynne moved to hold this Resolution for further discussion, seconded by Ald. Tendam. Resolution 27-R-17 was held for further discussion.**

**(P3) Ordinance 8-O-17, Amending Portions of the City of Evanston Zoning Code Regulating Micro-Distilleries**
The Plan Commission and staff recommend adoption of Ordinance 8-O-17, amending the Zoning Code’s permitted and special uses within a number of the Business, Commercial and Industrial Zoning Districts relating to micro-distilleries. Based on feedback from the Plan Commission and staff research, staff is proposing to amend the zoning ordinance to change “micro-distillery” to “craft-distillery or micro-distillery”. This modification also aligns with terminology used in the state liquor control regulations. This terminology change would require updating the sections currently regulating business and commercial districts, which permit micro-distilleries as a special use.

For Introduction

Ald. Holmes moved to introduce Ordinance 8-O-17, seconded by Ald. Rainey. The Committee voted unanimously, 7-0, to introduce Ordinance 8-O-17.

(P4) Ordinance 37-O-17, Granting Special Use Approval for a Planned Development with Rezoning and Special Use for a Convenience Store at 831 Emerson
The Plan Commission and staff recommend adoption of Ordinance 37-O-17 for approval of the Planned Development with rezoning from C1 Commercial and R5-General Residential to C1a Commercial Mixed use and a Special use for a convenience store. The 9-story 242-unit residential building would include 3,300 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 174 parking spaces on site. The development includes 10 site development allowances which can be found on the corresponding transmittal memorandum.

For Introduction

Ald. Wilson moved to introduce Ordinance 37-O-17, seconded by Ald. Holmes.

The petitioners provided a presentation, outlining the building location, materials and appearance, height, unit allocation, parking, and compatibility of the development with the adjacent surroundings.

Diane Petersmarck, Resident, voiced support for the project, stating that the developer has been very open in listening to residents’ voices, and that this is the best of a bad situation.

Jean Henry, Resident, stated that the current building is an eyesore and parts of it are vacant, and that the current development proposal is better than the previous proposal. The resident raised concerns about density, but stated that despite those concerns, they do not know if a better project can be proposed.

Dr. Michael Stevens, Resident, voiced concerns about the size of the development, landscaping, and setbacks, stated that the location of the development is disproportionate to adjacent buildings, CTA easement agreements, and environmental site remediation.
Susan Wolan, Resident, stated that although there are cosmetic changes to this plan, there are problems with this proposal, including representations in the plan renderings.

Ald. Wynne raised concerns about unit size, price, and sidewalks. Ald. Wynne confirmed unit square footage and rentals, and petitioner compared the size of these units to similar developments near the neighborhood. Ald. Wynne stated that there are issues with an eight foot sidewalk adjacent to the development. Petitioner clarified that sidewalk is 11’6”, and Ald. Wynne reiterated that development needs to be pushed back.

Ald. Fiske seconded Ald. Wynne’s sidewalk concerns, and raised the issue of restoring the parkway and rebuilding Emerson Street. Ald. Fiske asked how the building could be improved if the developer’s $2.4 million IHO payment was returned. The petitioner stated that they could probably push building back and reduce units for $2.4 million, but could not provide specific details.

Ald. Tendam asked whether concerns about setbacks were raised at a time when revisions could have been made.

Ald. Revelle asked about the market feasibility of micro-studio and studio units. The petitioner stated that this unit size is the trend in the market, due to the lower cost of rent and proximity to transit.

Ald. Rainey asked staff to provide information on unit sizes to introduce Committee to that literature.


IV. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION
There were no items for discussion.

V. COMMUNICATIONS
There were no communications.

VI. ADJOURNMENT
Ald. Holmes moved to adjourn, seconded by Ald. Tendam.

The committee voted unanimously 7-0 to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicholas Zettel