MEETING NOTES
COMP PLAN SUBCOMMITTEE
Tuesday, February 11, 2014
7:30 A.M.
Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Room 2403

Members Present: Scott Peters, Richard Shure, Terri Dubin, Jim Ford, Lenny Asaro
Members Absent: Seth Freeman

Staff Present: Damir Latinovic, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner

Public: Jessica Feldman, 450 Davis St.

1. CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Peters called the meeting to order at 7:30 A.M.

2. DISCUSSION
• Chairman Peters opened the meeting and indicated that he will be part of the upcoming meeting (most likely in March) with the members of the Planning and Development Committee of the City Council to discuss the status of the Comprehensive Plan. He provided a summary of items the Comprehensive Plan Committee discussed so far during 2013 and before:
  o Need for TOD developments, specifically around Dempster St, Main St. and South Blvd. stations
  o Increase residential densities particularly around transit stations.
  o Incorporate existing neighborhood plans into the Comprehensive Plan (Discussion followed if the Chicago Ave plan was formally adopted by the City Council)
  o Improvements to the east-west transit mobility
  o Change in demographics – Demand for apartments and condos by the aging population and millennial generation.
  o Asbury St. area for artists and small art studios/live-work spaces

• Commissioner Ford noted there is a generational difference and potential risk when planning for 20-somethings and the mid-30s generation about to have their first child, as one type of population segment. They are different in their stage of life. To which Commissioner Shure stated that they all still want walkable environment and access to transit.

• Chairman Peters stated that the Comprehensive Plan would include recommendations such as including mixed uses in certain areas with an action recommendation to update the Zoning Ordinance/Zoning Districts to reflect the Comp. Plan recommendation.

• Upon a question about a possible theater district, Chairman Peters said there was a vision to have it as part of the downtown, but it never fully materialized.
Chairman Peters asked if there are any other issues facing Evanston that could be part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Ford questioned if the city is short on open space.

Mr. Latinovic, Neighborhood and Land Use planner for the city stated that he can check with the Parks Department to see if they have an Open Space Plan of their own with a summary of existing conditions and issues on open space in the city.

Mr. Latinovic also provided a brief summary on the status of the Main St. TOD study which includes two small “pocket parks” north and south of the existing CTA station building off of Chicago Avenue.

Commissioner Shure asked if the sustainability could be part of the Comprehensive Plan.

The discussion followed on the process for the development of the Comprehensive Plan, specifically on the public input gathering.

Chairman Peters said that they should:
1. Prepare a draft version,
2. Present it to public to gather the input from the stakeholders,
3. Finalize the plan during Plan Commission hearings and
4. Wrap up the process with a recommendation to the City Council.

The original timeline was to finish the plan before the election season in spring of 2015. He acknowledged that the upcoming March meeting will be critical to understand Council’s support, what the next steps are, if a consultant can be hired, etc…

Commissioner Shure pointed out that the original Plan in 1917-1920 was extremely well written.

Commissioner Ford asked for more information about the meeting in March, to which Chairman Peters stated that he would be invited, but that other members of the Comp. Plan Committee should also come to the meeting.

Commissioner Ford stated that the Comprehensive Plan process is the time for the community to figure out what they want to be: a place like Barrington, or a place like Lincoln Park, or Maywood.

Chairman Peters stated that a lot of residents feel like they are exurban residents and those discussions should not be held in a political venue.

Commissioner Shure asked how we can get input from residents that are hard to reach?

Jessica Feldman of 450 Davis St in Evanston, stated that the sooner the community is aware of the meeting process, the more input you will get.

Chairman Peters stated that more residents will show up and provide more input if they have a proposal to look at. He stated that during the previous process, a lot more residents showed up at the end then in the beginning of the process.

Commissioner Asaro stated that part of the problem is that residents are not aware of the meetings until there is a project in their neighborhood and then they come out.

Ms. Feldman stated that how to reach the people is an issue.

Discussion followed on the public input.
Chairman Peters stated that it would be best if the Committee prepares a draft so that the residents have something to react to.

Discussion followed on going to the public with questions, answers, issues and opportunities.

Commissioner Asaro noted that it is important how the meetings are presented. Perhaps they should be advertised as meetings on how you want to use your property/your community, rather than a public meeting on the Comprehensive Plan.

Chairman Peters noted that is important to also present the alternatives.

Commissioner Ford noted that if there are demographic changes coming and different trends, they need to be put in front of the public and the Council.

Chairman Peters agreed that could be the first piece, but that the second piece could be the alternatives from the Committee’s point of view.

Upon a question, Chairman Peters said he will circulate some reading materials from the architect and planner Andres Duany. He sated the concern has to be city wide.

Commissioner Shure pointed out that what most likely will be brought up is safety, education and jobs.

Chairman Peters pointed to the bus route #250 that goes from downtown Evanston through Skokie and Des Plaines down to O'Hare airport and this route could become a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line.

Ms. Feldman noted that most people don’t know this and the City should publicize this.

Commissioner Shure questioned how to reach the growing Hispanic population, to which Commissioner Asaro pointed out that it would be helpful to have someone at the meeting who is bilingual.

3. NEXT STEPS
   - Chairman Peters stated he will circulate some reading materials from Andres Duany.

4. ADJOURNMENT
   There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 A.M.