MEETING MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
Wednesday, April 11, 2018
7:00 P.M.
Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, James C. Lytle Council Chambers

Members Present: Colby Lewis (Chair), Terri Dubin, Carol Goddard, George Halik, Peter Isaac, Andrew Pigozzi, Jolene Saul

Members Absent: Patrick Brown, Simon Belisle

Staff Present: Melissa Klotz, Zoning Planner
Scott Mangum, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Mario Treto, Assistant City Attorney

Presiding Member: Colby Lewis, Chairman

1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chairman Lewis called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: March 14, 2018

Commissioner Dubin made a motion to approve the minutes from March 14, 2018 as edited. Commissioner Goddard seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were unanimously approved, 7-0.

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. PLANNED DEVELOPMENT 18PLND-0005

1727 Oak Avenue
Trammell Crow Company, developer, proposes to construct a 17-story active adult, age restricted, multi-family rental development with 169 units and 139 parking spaces in the D3 Downtown Core Development District. The applicant seeks site development allowances for: 1) number of dwelling units (169 where 117 allowed); 2) building height (155 feet where 170 feet allowed as a site development allowance); 3) front yard setback (1 foot where a minimum of 3 feet required); and 4) loading (1 short berth where 2 short berths required).

Ms. Klotz presented a brief overview of updates to the proposed planned development.
Johnny Carlson explained the details of the updated proposal, clarifying the building is age-restricted in accordance with Fair Housing regulations with every unit being occupied by at least one person 55 years of age or older. He also stated that the Development adds additional street parking and removes a curb cut. The parking provided is in excess of the minimum code requirement.

Leah Riley, ADA Specialist, added that 2 ADA spaces will be added on the street, plus ADA curb ramps, the midblock crosswalk will be shortened and restriped and additional signage will be added. She continued, stating that the entire building will be in full compliance with all ADA codes. There will be a power operated door at the building entrance and an indoor accessible bicycle parking and maneuvering space. There will also be extra wide doors and corridors that fit stretchers, built-in seats and grab bars in showers, and an ADA accessible rooftop pool.

Luay Aboona, KLOA Traffic Consultant, added that enhancement of Oak/Clark three-way intersection (to be done by 1815 Ridge/Oak development) will connect crosswalks to the north end of the 1727 Oak development. Additionally, a speed study was done by the City for 1 week to measure the speed of traffic. Results show there is no speeding problem occurring on the block with existing conditions. Average speeds were 13 and 14 mph. The 85% speed (typically used) was 21 mph, still below the speed limit. Mr. Aboona also explained vehicular use of an age restricted building compared to other uses that are allowed to show a much lower vehicular demand from an age-restricted building.

Aaron Roseth, ESG Architects, stated that based on feedback from the previous meeting and the community, architectural details were refined to show a modern style building with playful fenestration and a strong podium. He also clarified that the stairwell to the roof was added per code requirement.

Johnny Carlson then compared the building height to surrounding buildings, noting 88’ height of the Sienna development, 120’ Shand Morahan building, and 259’ building across the tracks on Maple Ave. He then emphasized that the proposed building does not max out height (max 268.5’ allowed Site Development Allowance) nor does it max out height described in the downtown plan. Shadow studies were shown for all seasons, animating an 8 hour day for each.

Chair Lewis then opened up the hearing for public comment. 21 people spoke which included the following comments:

- Clarification on whether or not the street will be narrowed to shorten the crosswalk? Mr. Aboona responded no, not to vehicular traffic.
• If consideration been given to reducing the allowances based on community input. Mr. Roseth responded architectural issues were addressed based on community input.

• How many units will have a roll-in shower so residents can age in place? Ms. Riley responded the entire building will be ADA compliant and many units have bathtubs instead. Some units have transfer showers, and all showers have shower seats and grab bars. Many of these are enhancements beyond code requirements.

• Concern that this building will obstruct the view from across the street and add more traffic, making it difficult to bike around the area and add to general bike and pedestrian safety.

• Concerns about the speed study. Since there were big blinking signs, that would affect the vehicle speeds. Officer Napier responded the speed was evaluated first, and the sign was put up after the study, which is typically done when there are questions of excessive speed.

• Concerns that the intersection of Ridge/Green Bay/Emerson was not analyzed as part of the applicant’s study.

• Commissioner Dubin interjected and stated it would be best to fix the Oak curve to make it a true 90 degree corner, and asked if the City has considered that. Ms. Klotz responded she was not aware of any discussion to modify the curve, and it would likely be difficult to do so given the existing structures in the area.

• A presentation was given by Philip Crihfield, 1720 Oak, on behalf of 18 concerned Sienna condo owners:
  o Approximately 20% of Sienna population is physically and developmentally disabled.
  o Proposal is twice the height of Sienna.
  o Average height of all buildings west of the track is 100’. East of the tracks the buildings are taller with an average of 134’.
  o There is not enough on-street parking already, so this building will make it worse.
  o Developer was asked to add more parking underground but declined.
  o Building is too large, too intense, will overwhelm the area, and create safety hazards.

• Questions regarding whether or not the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance is being followed for size, rate, number, Code says 50-60% AMI rates. A representative from Interfaith Action and Joining Forces stated he was pleased 10% of the units will be affordable, however, of those units really need to be at 50% AMI and the other half at 60% AMI. If we want people to age in place then we need more 2 bedroom units to house a caregiver.

• Concerns over how the proposed project will impact Mt. Zion church. Questions included: Were any traffic studies done on Sundays when parishioners were present? 1815 Oak will be close, and now 1727 Oak close by in the other direction. Will there be other uses in the building such as a restaurant, hotel,
etc.? Will street parking become parallel? Is the dog park entirely on 1727 Oak property?

- Delores Holmes, former alderman stated that good communication makes great neighbors. As a member of Mt. Zion church, she had the questions regarding: will parking change on Clark St, dog park location, and public benefits.
- Developer has stated underground parking is not an option due to the water table, but surrounding buildings have underground parking. The stormwater management calculation has 6 square feet to spare, so it did not take into account changing climate. Mr. Carlson stated that the water table fluctuates from property to property - on this site it is at 6-8’. so it is not feasible to put parking underground.
- Concern that the architect/firm is not licensed in Illinois, per the IDPR. Project needs to do full appraisals of surrounding properties to determine if values will be affected by the development. Project is noncompliant with Fair Housing laws. Submitted evidence.
- Ann Sychon, Executive Director of Center for Independent Futures, which owns a condo at 1740 Oak - increased density and traffic will affect the quality of life for many residents of Sienna. Parking for supportive staff is already not enough. With 1815 Oak/Ridge and this project, that is 323 more units but only 206 parking spaces. More parking is needed. Additionally, there are residents with special needs who are still able to drive and work. There is some concern for their safety.
- General opinion and public statements that the building is a bad idea.

Mr. Carlson responded to several items, providing the following additional information after public testimony:

- The project architect is licensed and perhaps the search for architect was for ESG and not the full name (Elness Swenson Graham Architects).
- Stormwater calculations will meet LEED Silver requirement.
- Both staff and the development team have tried to contact and notice residents multiple times in a variety of ways. Will continue to reach out in various ways and would like to meet with Mt. Zion.
- Street will not be narrowed - only at the crosswalk section and not impacting vehicular lanes. On street parking will be angled stalls.
- The proposed dog park is completely on private property, and will follow City licensing/permitting dog park requirements.
- There are 2-bedroom units, as well as varying sized studio and 1-bedroom units. 15% are small 2 bedrooms and 8% are large 2 bedrooms. The average unit size is 818 sq. ft.
- Originally proposed to pay fee in lieu for affordable housing but worked with the City to find an alternative that is better for the community and have now agreed to put all 17 affordable units on-site with modified AMIs and unit sizes. All 17 units at 50 and 60% AMI is not economically feasible. Instead, half of the 17 units will be at 50 and 60% AMI and the other half will be at 80% AMI.
The Commission then entered deliberation. Comments included the following:

Commissioner Halik stated that the proposed use, density and height are appropriate. This is close to downtown, and we want to encourage a walkable community. Traffic won’t be as much of an issue since it is an age restricted building in a walkable area with nearby public transportation. There is never enough street parking no matter what buildings and uses are there. Evanston has great architecture; however, the “playful architecture” is not good enough for Evanston and seems chaotic. If the project is recommended for approval, it should be conditioned on a different facade.

Chair Lewis asked if the development fits with the 2009 Downtown Plan, and Ms. Klotz responded yes, the use is appropriate and encourages walkability that is beneficial to other uses in the area. The bulk and height are within the Downtown Plan that calls for a 15-18 story building in that area which is specifically west of the train tracks.

Commissioner Isaac noted the project meets the requirements and guidelines of the Plan Commission. Parking is a concern in the area already. Chair Lewis noted existing parking conditions are not the fault of the developer, though their project should not exacerbate bad conditions.

Commissioner Isaac stated the Metra tracks at Oak and Clark block pedestrian access to parking right on the other side (farmers market location and the Maple St garage). A structural fix that is well beyond the scope of what this or another developer could do would help the parking situation dramatically by creating a pedestrian tunnel to connect the area to the underutilized parking.

Commissioner Dubin asked if Sienna residents and caregivers could get discounted parking passes for the parking garage to alleviate some parking concerns.

Commissioner Saul encouraged more community outreach beyond notices, which don’t always work.

Commissioner Pigozzi stated this is the right development for this property. There is no compelling evidence that the development would make the area less safe or less habitable, and the development may even improve the area/traffic/parking. Appreciate the effort to mitigate bird deaths, and like the design of the balconies on the building.

Commissioner Goddard stated it is a good use of the site. Big concern is the timing of construction with two large buildings being constructed in the area at the same time, and hopes staff can work out the best construction plan that minimally impacts others.
Chair Lewis agreed this is a good development for the site. It is not the burden of this developer to fix other problems that exist to the neighborhood. Truck traffic is a problem, but this development does not add to that problem.

Mr. Mangum summarized the 4 site development allowances requested.

Commissioner Halik motioned to recommend approval of the project with listed staff conditions as well as an added condition that the developer work with members of the appropriate City Committee on facade improvements. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pigozzi.

Mr. Mangum noted the project could undergo design modifications that DAPR could review and approve and noted a Construction Management Plan is one of the conditions listed, which can incorporate a coordinated effort with the 1815 Oak/Ridge construction.

**Ayes: Dubin, Halik, Isaac, Pigozzi, Saul, Lewis**  
**Nays: Goddard**

**Recommendation for approval with staff conditions and 1 additional condition as noted.**

Alderman Braithwaite, spoke to residents thanking them for their patience and apologizing to Mt. Zion Church regarding the lack of communication. He then requested that additional community meeting take place.

4. **OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

5. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Goddard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Pigozzi seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved by voice call 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 pm.

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