MEETING MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
Wednesday, October 10, 2018
7:00 P.M.
Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, James C. Lytle Council Chambers

Members Present: Colby Lewis (Chair), Jennifer Draper, Terri Dubin, Carol Goddard, Andrew Pigozzi, George Halik (7:10 P.M.), Peter Isaac

Members Absent:

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

Presiding Member: Colby Lewis, Chairman

1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chairman Lewis called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: June 13, 2018 and August 8, 2018

Chair Lewis made a correction to page one of the minutes for August 8, 2018. Commissioner Pigozzi then made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Commissioner Goddard. The Commission voted unanimously, 6-0, to approve the amended minutes of August 8, 2018.

Chair Lewis made a correction to page four of the minutes for June 13, 2018. Commissioner Goddard made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Commissioner Draper. The Commission voted unanimously, 6-0, to approve the minutes of June 13, 2018.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Major Adjustment to a Planned Development

1571 Maple Avenue

Michael McLean, applicant, submits for a major adjustment to the planned development approved by ordinance 19-O-15, and amended by ordinance 61-O-16, in order to modify the number of required leased parking spaces from 101 to 50 and amend the parking lease between the applicant and the
City of Evanston to include parking in the Sherman Avenue Garage. The proposed major adjustment will also modify the affordable housing requirement from two-on-site units at 100% AMI to one affordable at 60% AMI.

Ms. Jones provided a brief presentation of the requested adjustment to the Planned Development, emphasizing that no physical changes were proposed to the constructed building and that only the parking lease portion of the proposed adjustment was under the purview of the Plan Commission.

Mr. John McLinden provided an overview and reason for the request. He provided a brief history of the initial project review and stated that the parking spaces leases from building residents is currently well under the required 101 parking space lease. Fewer than 40 parking spaces are currently leased. He added that the studies that were included in the initial planned development review predicted a low vehicle ownership and parking space use.

Chair Lewis opened up the hearing to questions from the public.

- Mr. Alan Gratch asked several questions including: Why was the proposed change not considered and abandonment of the original plan? Is there evidence that the proposed adjustment is a reasonable request or indicates a change in circumstances? Has staff researched the applicant’s history of plan modifications? Has the City considered the effect of the adjustment on revenue? Ms. Jones explained that the zoning code allows for adjustments to approved planned developments and that this project falls under those regulations. She added that the review process for a major adjustment is largely the same as the process for a new planned development. Mr. McLean stated that he believes due diligence has been done with regards to the needed parking, referencing the parking study that was done during the review of the planned development. The approved and constructed development was required to provide more parking despite the study foreseeing a lack of vehicle use within the building. The E2 development is an example of how too much parking can create the need for adjustments in order to keep spaces utilized. Ms. Jones added that should the lease be modified, it could open up parking space availability for other customers.

- Mr. Ed Williams asked for clarification on the number of existing spaces due to the two existing Maven car-share spaces being in the parking lot. Approved to provide 12 on-site parking spaces. 13 spaces appear to be on the site, two of which are used by Maven car-share.

- Ms. Julie Rosen inquired about how the number of people with vehicles is determined, where they are being parked and if that information is accurate. She also questioned the availability of spaces within the Sherman Plaza garage. Mr. Bernard Citron, attorney for the petitioner, stated that the Parking Revenue Manager stated that initially parking spaces were not available in the Sherman Plaza garage, however, circumstances have changed. Mr. McLean clarified that
the request is to obtain the ability to park in the Sherman Plaza garage which the
development does not currently have. Mr. McLinden added that leases require
that the tenant disclose their vehicle ownership. Ms. Jones then stated that the
Secretary of State provides information on car ownership within Evanston which
is used for the purposes of obtaining wheel tax.

Chair Lewis then opened up the hearing to questions from the Commission. There were
several, including:

- Chair Lewis asked if there is a way to determine if residents are parking on the
  street and what permit parking is nearby. Ms. Jones referenced the Secretary of
  State information but stated she would need to check to see what permit parking
  areas are nearby. Chair Lewis then asked if the spaces in the on-site parking lot
  are leased. Mr. McLean responded that the on-site parking lot is open to the
  public and there are no leased spaces at that location.
- Commissioner Isaac asked if the City is amenable to a executing a new parking
  lease. Ms. Jones stated that there have been discussions with staff regarding this
  possible change to the lease and that a new lease would be tied to any change in
  the parking requirement. Mr. Mangum added that should the adjustment be
  approved, the lease would be amended as a part of the adjustment either at the
  same meeting or immediately thereafter.
- Commissioner Draper inquired about the occupancy of the apartment building
  and asked for clarification on the parking space breakdown. Mr. McLean stated
  that with the exception of the two affordable units, occupancy is 100%. He added
  that the request would be to reduce the leased spaces to 50 but that number is in
  addition to the on-site parking spaces at the site.
- Commissioner Pigozzi asked if the parking lease cost is directly passed on to the
  tenants. Mr. McLinden responded that the cost is passed on directly to the
  tenant.
- Commissioner Halik questioned how the applicant would know
  if tenants do not
  indeed have vehicles. Both Mr. McLean and Mr. McLinden stated that it is
  possible that a tenant has not disclosed their vehicle ownership. Building
  managers are also observant and have not noticed any additional vehicles.

Chair Lewis the opened up the public hearing to public testimony. Three member of the
public spoke, providing the following comments:

- Mr. Gratch asked that the Commission consider the number of tenants and the
  fact that that number could change. He also stated that the City should consider
  the $900,000 windfall that could come to the developer and how that may affect
  revenue.
- Mr. Williams stated that he was present during the initial review of the planned
  development and made comments regarding the parking then. At the time
  Sherman Plaza had a waitlist and could not lease additional parking spaces,
  stated that if approved, the City should consider charging for the spaces lost. He
  also stated that the believed the reduction in on-site affordable units was
unconscionable and that the applicant could get assistance in renting out those units. He then referred to issues with regards to miscalculations made in shutting down Elmwood Avenue and that promises made were easy to break.

- Ms. Rosen agreed with Mr. Williams’ comments and asked that the City consider the budget and have proper comparison for the number of tenants with vehicles.

Commissioner Isaac asked if there were any other developments that are similar to 1571 Maple with regards to the small amount of on-site parking. Ms. Jones stated that this project is unique with regards to proximity to available transit options and the small amount of on-site parking spaces.

Mr. McLinden made a closing statement emphasizing the data that shows the low parking space leasing counts and the studies from the initial review which predicted them. Mr. Mangum added that the DAPR and staff recommendation came about from the fact that the project is still new, being a just a year into occupancy and the need to have additional parking spaces should the demand change.

The Commission then entered deliberation. Commissioner Halik stated that he believes that TOD projects are great and the development trend is continuing. He added that it is unfortunate that many TODs are required to build garages that are more and more unused. With regards to revenue, if the demand for the spaces is there, the revenue will be recouped. This development is lucky to be in the location that it is in and the proposed lease reduction is a good move to make.

Commissioner Goddard recalled that the original project was not well received. Questioned how long the tenancy will be and stated that it is not the Commission’s duty to address revenue either for the City or the applicant. She would like to have more information on the number of parking spaces available in the Sherman Plaza garage.

Commissioner Dubin reiterated Commissioner Goddard’s comments and agreed that TOD is a good idea.

Chair Lewis inquired whether or not it would be possible to write the changes in a way to permit changes to the lease without future petitions.

The Commission then reviewed the following Zoning Code Sections: Standards for a Special Use (Section 6-3-5-10), the Standard for Planned Development (Section 6-3-6-9) and standards and guidelines established for Planned Developments in the D3 Downtown Core Development District. (Section 6-11-1-10). The Commission found that the applicable standards had been met or maintained from the original development.

Commissioner Isaac made a motion to recommend amendment of the ordinance to reduce the number of required parking leases from 101 to 70 with an option to rent parking spaces in either Maple Avenue or Sherman Plaza
garage as available. Commissioner Draper seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved, 6-1.

Ayes: Draper, Dubin, Halik, Isaac, Pigozzi, Lewis.
Nays: Goddard

4. OTHER BUSINESS
   Election of a Vice Chair

Commissioner Goddard made a motion to nominate Commissioner Peter Isaac as Vice-Chair of the Plan Commission, seconded by Commissioner Halik. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved, 6-0 with one abstention.

Ayes: Draper, Dubin, Goddard, Halik, Lewis, Pigozzi.
Nays:
Abstention: Isaac

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

6. ADJOURNMENT

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

A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved by voice call 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm.

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