



**APPROVED**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**ZONING COMMITTEE OF THE PLAN COMMISSION**

Wednesday, October 11, 2017

7:00 P.M.

Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Room 4802

Members Present: Carol Goddard, Colby Lewis, Terri Dubin, Simon Belisle, Peter Isaac

Members Absent:

Other Plan Commission Members Present: none

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

Presiding Member: Colby Lewis, Chairman

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**1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

With a quorum present, Chairman Lewis called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**2. MINUTES**

Approval of October 21, 2015 Zoning Committee of the Plan Commission Meeting Minutes:

Commissioner Goddard made a motion to approve the minutes.

Commissioner Belisle seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved with a voice vote 5-0.

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. DISCUSSION**

**C1a Regulations**

Plan Commission referral to the Zoning Committee to discuss possible retirement of or revisions to the C1a Commercial Mixed-Use Zoning District, per Aldermanic referral.

Ms. Meagan Jones gave a brief overview explaining the origins of the referral describing the existing locations for the C1a zoning district and current uses/development within the district, and possible solutions to concerns raised regarding several district regulations.

Chairman Lewis inquired whether there are other zoning districts that would meet similar intent of the C1a District.

Commissioner Belisle stated that the Zoning appears to fit the area, especially with regards to permitted uses, and that adjacent uses include 3 to 4 story apartment and condominium buildings.

Chairman Lewis stated that there has been increased development creating a more vibrant corridor than what was there previously.

Commissioner Belisle asked if there could be some provision that requires wider sidewalks similar to those created by the AMLI development. Chairman Lewis stated that there is a ziggurat setback for the rear yard which abuts less dense zoning districts in the area. He then stated that the canyon effect is not as significant on the western side of Chicago Avenue and Commissioner Belisle stated that lot sizes are also fairly small adjacent to the train tracks.

Commissioner Goddard stated that the Committee needs clarification on the Alderman's concerns about the zoning district. Mr. Mangum clarified that Alderman Wynne's concerns were the increased occurrence of smaller units (the lot area per dwelling unit is too small), the narrow widths of sidewalks especially next to a façade of a larger development creating a canyon effect, as well as the possibility of the C1a being expanded to other areas of the City, and keeping the streets pedestrian friendly.

There was discussion regarding how to best address the concerns raised by the Alderman, including a provision for increasing setbacks for residential floors of mixed-use buildings and keeping commercial uses on the ground floor at the lot line. A building stepback above the typical cornice height could be made to keep pedestrian walkability. This could be similar to the downtown district where there are several streets which require a ziggurat setback. The committee then addressed alleviating issues with narrow sidewalk width by adjusting the building setbacks.

A question was raised on what the intent of the C1a district is and what other districts may be able to be put in its place. Staff provided clarification on the zoning requirements within the C1a as well as a comparison to similar zoning districts. The Committee observed that surrounding districts had significantly lower FAR and could possibly create nonconforming structures if applied to the C1a zoning district. The area southwest of Lee Street is transit rich so greater density and FAR is more acceptable in that area.

Commissioner Goddard stated that a precedent had been set with newer development and that changing the zoning might not be appropriate at this point. Commissioner Isaac stated that now is time to change regulations as there are no major development projects proposed within the area being looked at.

Commissioner Dubin inquired about what current zoning regulations prohibit the goals the Alderman ultimately wants for the area. Chair Lewis stated that the front yard setback being up to the lot line seems to be a major factor. He used the recent 1571 Maple development as an example for density, sidewalk width and pedestrian scale.

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Belisle used the Cross-Rhodes Restaurant building as an example of where the sidewalk becomes very narrow and discussion followed regarding possible ways to obtain wider sidewalks. Commissioner Isaac stated that the City cannot legislate giving up property for this purpose but the building setback could be adjusted. Larger developments (planned developments) enable more negotiation with regards to this concern. Questions arose of what new development would come in that would not be a planned development as there are few undeveloped lots along Chicago Avenue in this area but several lots exist that could be redeveloped.

Possible solutions to address concerns included slightly lowering the maximum height and, if a greater building setback is provided (at least at the ground level) allowing a greater maximum height in return. With regards to density, reducing the maximum percentage increase for site development allowances was suggested. A possibility of creating requirements for unit mix was suggested but it was agreed to start with adjusting existing requirements. It was clarified that unit mix is largely a market driven aspect of a development as is size of the units.

Commissioner Isaac suggested keeping the height cap within the C1a at 97 feet with site development allowances but reducing the base maximum height to encourage wider sidewalk in exchange for height. Setback for upper levels were discussed, specifically how to determine (standard height across the board versus based on use).

C1a was seen by the Committee as having the appropriate goal, and being appropriate for the TOD area, but adjustments could be made to achieve solutions for concerns raised. The zoning can be modified in order to achieve goals of a more walkable environment.

The Committee requested that additional information on the Floor Area Ratio (FAR), building height in feet, and square footage of lots with recent development be added to the chart provided in the meeting packet along with possible recommendations for code revisions.

**The Commissioners voted to continue the discussion to a date to be determined in order to gather additional information.**

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Belisle made a motion for adjournment and Commissioner Dubin seconded the motion. With all commissioners in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

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