MEETING MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
Wednesday, February 13, 2019
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, George Halik, Andrew Pigozzi

Members Absent: Peter Isaac

Staff Present: Meagan Jones, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner
Scott Mangum, Planning and Zoning Manager
Hugh Dubose, Assistant City Attorney

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: January 9, 2019

Commissioner Pigozzi made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Goddard. The Commission voted unanimously, 6-0, to approve the minutes of January 9, 2019.

3. NEW BUSINESS
Chair Lewis suggested that, due to two planned development projects being on the agenda, the proposed text amendment be moved from the first agenda item to the last. There were no objections from the Commission.

A. Text Amendment
Ground Floor Uses in the Central Street Overlay District 19PLND-0010
A Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment pursuant to City Code Title 6, Zoning, to Section 6-15-14-7 of the Zoning Ordinance, to revise the regulations of the oCSC Central Street Overlay District regarding active ground floor uses.

Mr. Mangum provided a brief overview of the proposed text amendment and alerted the Commission that the amendment is being brought forward due to a Special Use
recently filed regarding banquet halls in the oCSC Zoning District.

Chair Lewis clarified that the proposed amendment would bring the overlay regulations more in line with base zoning and that the changes only apply to ground floor uses. Mr. Mangum confirmed that this is the case. There were no questions or comments from the public.

The standards for approval were then reviewed.

Commissioner Halik made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed text amendment as presented by staff. Commissioner Pigozzi seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed, 6-0.

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

B. Planned Development
2425 Oakton Street 18PLND-0085
HPCW, LLC, the applicant, proposes to construct a car wash facility with 20 vacuum spaces and 4 parking spaces in the I1 Industrial District and oRD Redevelopment Overlay District. The applicant seeks a site development allowance for an accessory structure that is 3 ft. away from the principal structure where 10 ft. is required. In addition, the applicant may seek and the Plan Commission may consider Site Development Allowances as may be necessary or desirable for the proposed development.

Ms. Jones provided an overview of the proposed project, briefly describing the site, listing the site development allowance and the proposed public benefit.

Mark Daniels, attorney for the applicant, then spoke. Providing more detail on the proposed project and describing the ingress and egress on the site and how it relates to circulation within and around the site. He then added that the landscaping to the east of the ingress was tapered due to the adjacent business’s use of the driveway for trucks turning into that property. The landscaping will be phased for that reason. Mr. Daniels then addressed the site development allowance, stating that there is the ability to attach the canopy, however, there is concern regarding the wind load and possible damage to building. The preference is to keep the canopy detached. He added that the detention area is on the north extension of the property adjacent to detention for the Home Depot property and water collection concerns at the exit are addressed by additional turns needed after exiting the car wash building. He then added that the owner intends to recycle water inside the car wash and the bicycle rack has been relocated closer to the street. The existing powerline will be relocated.

Chair Lewis opened up the hearing to questions from the Commission.
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- Commissioner Halik inquired about where the existing traffic signal will be relocated to and if it will be in conflict with the existing driveways. He then asked how the owner proposes to prevent left turns in and out of the site. Mr. Daniel and Mr. Jeff Miller of Watermark Engineering responded that the traffic signals will be combined to have a mast arm and be just south of the existing location. KLOA has been involved with the planning of the intersection for previous projects and no conflicts are anticipated. Signage will be installed to address left turns and the site configuration will slow traffic within the site.

- Commissioner Goddard asked why the vacuum canopy would not be connected to the building. Mr. Daniel stated there was concern of wind load and possible damage to the car wash building. It would also be easier to maintain the vacuums with the canopy detached.

- Chair Lewis asked if there is a power line easement. Mr. Daniel stated that there is an easement but there should be no issue if it needs to be adjusted. The power line is a regional line that cannot be adjusted too much. Chair Lewis then asked how water recycling will work. Mr. Daniel stated that tanks store, cleanse and filter the used water then return it into the system.

Chair Lewis then opened up the public hearing to questions and comments from the public. 2 people spoke with the following concerns:

- Michael Bonaguro, resident and attorney representing the owners of the Shell Station south of the site voiced concerns over access to the nearby parks with large amount of traffic that they see in addition to the Sports Dome. He also stated that the right-in only is going to cause a delay and more research should be done on the potential abuse of other driveways in the vicinity of the site. He added that the additional taxes from the site will not be enough of a benefit to Evanston.

- Dilshad Lakhani, owner of the Shell Station south of the site, stated that she was opposed to the proposed project due to existing congestion that may lead to people shopping elsewhere. There would be no revenue coming in from the proposed use.

Mark Daniel responded, saying that there is a benefit to the project and that the use is a service that has increased in numbers due to convenience. He clarified that there are 4 lanes of traffic on Oakton St. at this location, not 2 lanes, and the taper to 2 lanes occurs east of the site. He added that the proposal will largely take from existing traffic instead of creating additional traffic and that KLOA has included other uses in their study. He stated that the site is not likely to be a regular retail use.

Chair Lewis alerted the public present that a written request for a continuance can be requested. Mr. Bonaguro stated that the submitted traffic study is a concern and that he and his clients would like to gather additional traffic information from property owners and actual parking numbers. They would also be disputing the stated amount of traffic coming from the south onto Oakton Street.
Mr. Bonaguro submitted a written request for a continuance which was accepted. The public hearing was continued to the March 13, 2019 Plan Commission meeting.

C. Planned Development
910-938 Custer Avenue

Kevin Lee, property owner, proposes to construct 40 single family attached townhomes in five standalone buildings with 2 enclosed parking spaces per dwelling unit. The applicant requests a Map Amendment to rezone the property from the MUE Transitional Manufacturing-Employment District to the MXE Mixed-Use Employment District. The applicant requests a special use for a Planned Development with Site Development Allowances for: 1) 40 dwelling units where 32 dwelling units are allowed; 2) 44.2 ft. and 4 stories in height where 41 ft. and 3 stories is allowed; 3) 5 ft. west rear yard setback where 15 ft. is required; 4) townhouse orientation facing interior and side yards where townhouse orientation must face the street; 5) 7 ft. front yard, 2ft. south interior side yard, and 1ft. west rear yard setbacks for balconies where a 9 ft. front yard setback is required, 4.5 ft. south interior side yard setback is required, and a 13.5 ft. west rear yard setback is required for balconies; and 6) 5' ft.-10 ft. landscape strip along the south and west property boundaries where a 25 ft. wide landscape strip is required. In addition, the applicant may seek and the Plan Commission may consider additional Site Development Allowances as may be necessary or desirable for the proposed development.

Ms. Klotz provided an overview of the project, describing the site listing the requested site development allowances and proposed public benefits. She also stated that the applicant intends to seek TIF funding, though that is not under the purview of the Plan Commission.

Mr. Bill Rotolo, TWM Consulting, introduced the development team then Mr. Mike Cook, Cook Engineering Group, provided more details on the project describing existing conditions, the proposed layout of the site emergency access, and the proposed turnaround at the north end of the site. He added that they will be meeting MWRD requirements and be providing an underground stormwater system and permeable pavers.

Mr. Doug Wirth, architect, reviewed the building design and materials. He added that there are two unit types and solar arrays on the roof of each unit. Mr. Craig Burton stated that energy modeling had been done for energy efficiency of the site and net zero guidelines were followed.

Mr. Gary Lehman provided information on the landscaping, describing the proposed roof
gardens, some private gardens and landscaping proposed along the CTA embankment. A monument sign is proposed at the southeast corner of the site. One of the public benefits includes this landscaping along with a planting proposal at the park along the embankment near the Main Street CTA station and a possible mural.

Mr. Javier Milan of Kenig, Lindgren, O’Hara, Aboona, Inc. (KLOA) stated that traffic counts were taken on November 8, 2018 at the Main/Custer, Sherman/Main, Custer/public alley intersections, Sherman/Parking Lot 31 drive aisle and the drive leading to Evanston Lumber Yard. All operate at acceptable levels of service. There was suggestion of possibly removing 1 or 2 spaces on Main in order to provide better site lines at the intersection. Since 12 new parking spaces are proposed on Custer Ave., there would still be an overall gain in on-street parking.

Mr. Rotolo stated that a market exists for this use as it is not provided in large numbers in Evanston. The typical buyer is mid 40’s to mid-50’s in age with children, if they have them, in high school or older. The prices will range from high $600,000 to high $700,000 with a good amount of living space. He then reviewed the proposed public benefits.

Chair Lewis then opened up the public hearing to questions from the Commission. These questions included the following:

- Commissioner Pigozzi stated that the intersection near the site is difficult to navigate and inquired about the existing lot at Evanston Lumber having alley access. Mr. Milan stated that, per staff request, signage would be provided to discourage cutting through the parking lot on the opposite side of the alley off of Sherman Ave.
- Commissioner Pigozzi then stated that nearby Lincoln School is overcrowded and even though it is not under the purview of the Commission, he wondered if possible negative effects of TIF on the school had been considered. Mr. Rotolo stated that the proposed use does not generate many school aged children. There may be language within the redevelopment agreement to divert money to the school district.
- Commissioner Goddard asked if a signalized/countdown timer may be necessary at the intersection.
- Commissioner Dubin asked for clarification regarding green roof vs. roof garden. Mr. Lehman explained that there will be a shallow tray system installed with a limited load so what is proposed is a green roof. Ms. Draper asked for clarification on access to that use. Mr. Wirth described the roof top deck that would provide access to the green roof.
- Chair Lewis asked what would be required for a front yard. Ms. Klotz responded that the setback of the property is along Custer Ave and is different from what the developers are referring to in front of each unit. Mr. Rotolo added that the fee simple may be adjusted to include areas in front of the home. Covenants will prohibit certain changes.
- Chair Lewis asked if a market study was done. Mr. Rotolo responded yes and
that the demand is high. Sales operations will occur during construction, space on Main St. may be rented for this purpose. Construction will begin without presales.

Chair Lewis opened up the public hearing to questions from the public. A total of 7 people spoke, including the following:

- Ashaf Manji, resident, stated that he liked the idea of rezoning and that the area will likely become residential. He added that the Commission should consider the proposed concessions.
- Stan Eastman, resident, asked if Evanston Lumber will continue to operate. Mr. Rotolo responded that Evanston Lumber will continue to operate and the proposed development will not take over the site.
- Hilly Hacker, resident, asked if intergenerational homes had been considered. Mr. Rotolo responded that this was not considered and that type of use may not fit with zoning requirements. The layout of the homes somewhat address that.
- Martin Renke inquired about concrete in the alley and who will cover the cost of moving utilities. Mr. Rotolo stated that the cost will be covered by the developer and some utilities will have to be buried.
- Ellyn Frank Miller, resident, asked if cars have access to Custer Ave. Mr. Milan stated that residents will utilize the alley. Mr. Milan stated emergency vehicles can also use Custer Ave for access. Ms. Frank Miller then asked if there was any effect to parking on Main Street by the alley widening and if a 4-way stop may be proposed at Custer Ave. and Main St. Mr. Milan responded that additional signage could be looked at and evaluated and removing a parking space on Main St. could also be considered. A 4-way stop would be a last resort.
- Jeff Silver, resident, voiced concerns regarding the variances needed, adding that the proposed building height is 50% taller than existing surrounding structures. He then asked if the developer intended to pave the entire alley to which Mr. Rotolo responded that the portions of the alley adjacent to the site will be paved.
- Robert Fisher, Evanston Lumber, asked if there are any provisions for construction parking and if there is enough room in the alley for two-way traffic. Mr. Rotolo responded that general conversations have occurred with staff regarding parking and that the alley can accommodate two-way traffic.

Chair Lewis then asked for public testimony. A total of 7 people spoke including the following:

- Mr. Eastman stated that the site is not appropriate for the proposed use and he strongly urges the Commission to not grant additional development allowance. He added that the nearby intersection is dangerous and residents will likely drive through the parking lot on Sherman Ave. He also stated that the proposed building does not fit into the neighborhood.
- Ms. Hacker asked why the development does not stick to zoning regulations and that stated that the area will be tremendously affected by additional traffic.
● Mr. Renke stated that the location offers a great chance to build something that takes advantage of transit. He suggested that the project could remove some parking and reduce the building height and added that the alley is still too narrow.

● Ms. Frank Miller expressed excitement to see development at the site but concern about traffic, specifically through the parking lot and that staff should address that issue.

● David Adams, resident, asked why the homes are 4 stories and if there are any provisions compensating those affected by the development. Nichols school could be affected, He stated that he has concerns with the nearby intersection and possible bottleneck that could occur. He added that it would be nice to shrink the homes down.

● Mr. Silver stated that he loves the idea but shares the same objections expressed previously. The development should follow existing zoning and setbacks. Encourages denial of the project as is and encourages revisions.

● Mr. Fisher expressed excitement about redevelopment and emphasized that Custer Ave. is the lifeblood of Evanston Lumber and that the Main St. /Custer Ave. intersection is a nightmare. He challenged the applicant to conduct a traffic study in the summer during the busy season.

Chair Lewis closed the public hearing and the Commission began its deliberations.

Commissioner Halik stated that it is difficult to build affordable housing and he sees prospective purchasers as young families. He expressed that the interior spaces are almost too efficient with bedrooms being very narrow. Commissioner Halik continued saying height is not an issue adding that the request is not much higher than the requirement. He also mentioned that there are a variety of architectural styles in the area. Chair Lewis asked for clarification on the requirements versus what is requested. Ms. Klotz responded that 44.2 ft. height is requested where 41 ft. is allowed.

Commissioner Dubin stated that it is tough to see changes but that this type of housing is needed in Evanston.

Commissioner Draper stated that generally, the project is an improvement. The space will be broken up with courtyards but she would like to see more attention paid to the façade facing Custer Ave. She also recommended that net-zero standards be met.

Chair Lewis stated that the development is being sold as a transit oriented development and that it is trying to be both convenient and provide more parking. He expressed concern of delivery traffic to Evanston Lumber and that the proposed turnaround could be larger.

The Commission then reviewed the standards for approval of Map Amendment, Special Use and Planned Development Guidelines for the proposed development.
Commissioner Goddard suggested that a parking space be taken out on Main St. to increase visibility.

Commissioner Halik suggested that additional façade consideration be added to make the blank areas friendlier.

Commissioner Goddard made a motion to recommend approval of the map amendment, planned development and conditions as presented by staff with the added conditions of the removal of two parking spaces on Main St. and that the applicant continues to work with staff on the facade of the building. Commissioner Draper seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed, 6-0.

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

4. PUBLIC COMMENT
There was no public comment.

5. ADJOURNMENT
Commissioner Pigozzi made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Dubin seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved by voice vote 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 pm.

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