DESIGN AND PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE (DAPR) MINUTES
July 17, 2019


Staff Present: M. Rivera

Others Present:

Presiding Member: S. Mangum

A quorum being present, S. Mangum called the meeting to order at 2:40 pm.

Approval of Minutes

July 10, 2019, DAPR Committee meeting minutes.

L. Biggs made a motion to approve the July 10, 2019, DAPR Committee meeting minutes, seconded by M. Tristen.

The Committee voted 7-0 to approve the minutes with one abstention.

New Business

1. 1605-1631 Chicago Ave.
   
   Subdivision and Major Adjustment to a Planned Development
   Horizon Realty Group, the applicant, submits for a Subdivision and Major Adjustment to a Planned Development in the D4 Downtown Transition District. The requested adjustment will increase FAR from 3.15 to 4.2, increase parking spaces from 32 (23 on-site, 9 leased) to 38 (all leased off-site), and a decrease in total number of independent living units from 205 to 186 (includes 65 dwelling units). No new site development allowance will be needed.

2. 1621 Chicago Ave.
   
   Planned Development
   Horizon Realty Group, the applicant, submits for a Planned Development to construct a 19-story apartment building with 240 dwelling units, 85 subterranean parking spaces, and approximately 3,540 sf of ground floor retail space in the D4 Downtown Transition District. Site development allowances are being requested for: 1) a building height of 211.7’ where a maximum of 105’ is permitted, 145’ with site development allowance), 2) an FAR of 11.62 where a maximum of 5.4 is permitted, 6.0 with site development allowance, 3) 240 dwelling units where 54 is the maximum permitted, 4) 85 parking spaces where a minimum of 185 is required, and 5) 1 short loading berth where 2 short loading berths are required.
APPLICATION PRESENTED BY:  
Jeff Michael, applicant  
Tim Kent, architect

DISCUSSION:

- S. Mangum stated both agenda items are related. He stated the first agenda item involves a proposed subdivision of the property to create a new zoning lot and a major adjustment to The Merion Planned Development to reflect it being on a smaller lot.
- J. Michael stated the building north of The Merion is an eyesore, the property is underused, they are proposing to create a senior campus which will be unique to the area. He stated the proposed development will be a feeder to The Merion, the amenities available at The Merion will be available to residents of the proposed development. The objective is to keep seniors in Evanston. The proposed development will increase the tax base and is expected to generate 15-50 permanent jobs. The proposed size and density were reduced and architectural details changed after the first community meeting.
- T. Kent presented drawings showing the massing for the proposed development; he described uses for each floor. He reviewed the massing and architectural details.
- T. Kent noted the proposed driveway off Chicago Avenue leads to a porte-cochere for vehicle pick-ups and drop-offs, to avoid this activity occurring on Chicago Avenue. The same driveway leads to underground parking.
- M. Rivera asked for the width of the proposed driveway.
- Proposed driveway is 26’ wide.
- Sue Carlson asked about affordable housing.
- S. Mangum stated the applicant is proposing cash-in-lieu of units to comply with the previous version of the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (IHO).
- S. Mangum noted some of the required parking for The Merion is located on the development site, asked how required parking for The Merion will be met.
- Applicant stated they will lease spaces off-site.
- S. Mangum asked about building materials.
- T. Kent stated the ground floor will be brick and stone, the tower will be painted concrete and metal. He stated the concrete will have scored reliefs and possibly flutted to provide detail, with metal at the bay windows. He stated the architecture has a historic flavor with a contemporary twist. He stated the windows will be inset from the exterior wall by 4”-6”.
- S. Mangum asked about bird friendly measures.
- T. Kent stated they are still working on those details.
- L. Biggs stated her concern with the proposed driveway off Chicago Avenue instead of the alley. She stated there is a protected bike lane which will be less protected by the driveway.
- T. Kent stated the alley is not practical; it is too narrow, lined with several dumpsters, with heavy service traffic.
- J. Michael stated the proposed driveway reduces conflicts, stating there are existing conflicts getting to the alley which would increase with additional traffic to the alley generated by the proposed development.
- J. Hyink stated the proposed driveway increases the number of conflict points between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.
- L. Biggs stated the conflicts noted are existing, the driveway will add conflict points. The bike lane at Church Street and Davis Street are signaled; the alley is 20’ wide.
- S. Mangum stated improving the alley conditions could be achieved since the applicant is the owner of the majority of the south portion of the block as a benefit to the existing and proposed developments. Provided recent bike and pedestrian counts in front of the site for three 1-hour periods, 171 bikes and 381 pedestrians were counted.
S. Mangum stated the proposed driveway off Chicago Avenue creates a dead zone, less street activity.

M. Rivera stated about 3 on-street parking spaces will be lost due to the proposed driveway.

S. Mangum noted the proposed number of parking spaces is less than required even after the City reduced parking requirements.

J. Michael stated they are comfortable with the number of parking spaces to be provided given their history with The Merion.

L. Biggs stated the bay windows project over into the street right-of-way, an easement will be required.

The encroachment was noted to be 12” at a height 45’ above the street.

L. Biggs asked about stormwater management and ground water.

T. Kent stated they are still working through those details.

I. Eckersberg stated shoring will be needed when the foundation is being constructed.

S. Mangum stated the proposed height and FAR are excessive based on what has been approved, suggested the previously proposed 13 stories is more appropriate.

S. Mangum asked about public benefits.

J. Michael noted proposed public benefits include: an art project, opening the building up to civic events, environmental cleanup of the site, electric vehicle charging stations, and financial contribution to a local foundation for public improvements.

S. Mangum stated some of the proposed benefits are inherent to the proposed development, he suggested going beyond IHO requirements could be a public benefit.

S. Mangum read comments from Gary Gerdes, Building and Inspection Services Manager, asking about project valuation and schedule.

Applicant stated they are working on those details.

J. Hyink noted bike parking is proposed to be located on the lower level, asked if the elevator can accommodate bikes, how many bikes, and if it is designed for older persons. She stated at the least the elevators should be sized to accommodate up to 3 bikes being rolled into the elevator, or locate the bike room on the ground level.

S. Mangum stated he was not certain the Committee could recommend approval at this time, asked if the applicant would like to return with revisions.

Applicant stated they preferred to return to the Committee.

L. Biggs made a motion to hold item in Committee to allow the applicant time to address staff concerns, seconded by J. Hyink.

The Committee voted, 8-0, to hold item in Committee.

Adjournment

L. Biggs made a motion to adjourn, seconded by J. Hyink. The Committee voted, 8-0, to adjourn. The Committee adjourned at 4:12 pm.

The next DAPR meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 24, 2019, at 2:30 pm in Room 2404 of the Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Griffith