MEETING MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
Wednesday, July 24, 2019
7:00 P.M.

Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, James C. Lytle Council Chambers

Members Present: Peter Isaac (Vice-Chair), Terri Dubin, Carol Goddard, Andrew Pigozzi, Jane Sloss

Members Absent: Colby Lewis, Jennifer Draper, George Halik

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

Presiding Member: Vice-Chairman Isaac

1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Vice-Chair Isaac called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: July 10, 2019

Commissioner Goddard suggested a minor edit to the minutes. Commissioner Goddard then made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Commissioner Sloss. The Commission voted unanimously, 5-0, to approve the minutes of July 10, 2019 as amended.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Major Adjustment to Planned Development

1815 Oak Avenue  
19PLND-0039

Michael McLean, applicant, submits for a major adjustment to a planned development originally approved by ordinance 47-O-16. The adjustment includes an increase in FAR to 4.47 (originally approved at 4.35 and subsequently reduced via a Minor Adjustment to 3.97 in 2017), an increase in parking spaces from 67 to 70 (including 2 compact spaces), an increased side yard setback (south) from 4 feet to 5 feet, and a reduction of dwelling units from 102 to 43 (for a reduced total of 161 units/rooms from 163), eliminating the site development allowance for maximum number of dwelling units. The property is located in the D4 Downtown Transition District.
Vice-Chair Isaac made a statement explaining when the project was initially reviewed, he recused himself from the proceedings due to concern of a possible conflict of interest with the development entities and the firm he works for. He stated that the firm no longer represents that entity and the conflict is no longer an issue. Mr. Bernard Citron, Thompson Coburn, stated that the entity Vice-Chair Isaac referred to is no longer a part of the project.

Ms. Jones provided an overview of the proposed adjustment explaining what was initially approved and changes that have occurred to the proposal to this point.

Mr. Citron then provided a brief introduction to the project and the principals.

Mr. Michael McLean, Condor Partners, gave an explanation of why the adjustment was being sought. He stated that the Assisted Living with Cognitive Impairment use is removed, and that the parking level has been moved to a level below ground creating the lower building height. Mr. McLean then added that the management partner has been replaced with Solaris Senior Living, which has more experience in the Chicagoland area.

Vice-Chair Isaac opened the public hearing to questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Halik inquired about the construction schedule for the project and funding for the project. Mr. McLean explained that funding is being finalized and the development team is working with AEW Capital. The foundation permit is being reviewed and a general contractor has been secured. September groundbreaking is the goal.

Commissioner Goddard asked what assurance there is that the request will result in a building being constructed. Mr. McLean responded that the project is funded and working with the original partner caused delays in progress. That partner has changed and the project is now able to move forward.

Commissioner Goddard then expressed that neighbors have concern regarding another building currently under construction at 1727 Oak and construction happening concurrently. Mr. McLean responded that the team has been communicating with the church south of the site as well as with Trammel Crow. Their project is currently under construction, nearing the point of topping off. The construction progress for each project is at a different point. He added that a community meeting will be held prior to beginning construction to inform neighbors of what will be happening. A construction management plan has been completed and approved.

Commissioner Goddard inquired about Mt. Zion Church to the south of the project site.
Mr. McLean stated that an agreement with the church has been completed and they will continue to work with the church going forward.

Vice-Chair Isaac asked if the change with the parking garage will change traffic pattern. Mr. McLean responded that there will be no change as it relates to Ridge Ave. Rollover curb and signage exists in alley to keep non-emergency vehicles from using it to go to and from Ridge Ave. The ground level entry area is largely similar with minor changes. Vice-Chair Isaac then referred to drop-off area safety which was mentioned when the project was initially reviewed. Mr. McLean responded that the drop-off area is a bit safer since the loading area has been moved away from the drop-off entrance.

Vice-Chair Isaac then asked for clarification on the assisted living units. Mr. McLean explained that there will be no assisted living with cognitive impairment. The memory care units are smaller and with their removal and increasing other units, the FAR increased slightly due to larger units. The dwelling unit decrease comes from the removal of kitchens within a number of units, specifically the assisted living units. Kitchens were originally planned in those units but were found to be unnecessary.

Vice-Chair Isaac inquired about how the change in units will affect the number of employees. Mr. McLean stated that a reduced number of employees will be needed. Ms. Jones added that, for the purposes of determining parking, the same number of employees was used in calculations for both the approved and revised parking requirements.

Commissioner Sloss asked how access will be handled on the memory care floor. Mr. McLean stated access to and from that floor will be restricted and will be a self-contained floor with a dining area, kitchen, art/activity room, beauty salon and staff to help with daily living activities.

Commissioner Sloss then inquired about the change in design specifically with the terraces. Mr. McLean replied that those spaces will be a bit more open from what was previously approved. Those areas will be very programmed and timed for residents on those floors. Commissioner Sloss then asked about the natural elements within the terrace areas. Mr. McLean responded that there are a number of outdoor spaces planned for the site, including two small pocket parks with garden areas and planters, a large second floor terrace, and a rooftop patio for independent living units.

Commissioner Pigozzi inquired about access to the entry where a canopy previously existed and access to and from Ridge Avenue. Mr. McLean responded there will be a change in material, and a grade change with a rollover curb within the alley. Only emergency vehicle access will be permitted to enter and exit the alley going to Ridge Ave. Mr. McLean stated that pedestrians would be able to access Oak Ave. using sidewalk areas that go through the property and remove the need to cut through the church parking lot.
Vice-Chair Isaac then opened the hearing to questions from the public. Hearing none, he then asked for testimony from the public. Hearing none, he then closed the hearing and asked for questions and comments from the Commission.

Hearing none, Vice-Chair Isaac asked for closing statements. Mr. Citron asked that the Commission adopt the findings since the project is equal or lesser to what was originally recommended for approval by the Commission. There are more parking spaces and programming is larger similar.

The Commission then reviewed the relevant standards for approval for the planned developments and found that it met applicable standards.

Commissioner Goddard made a motion to recommend approval the major adjustment as presented. Commissioner Sloss seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed, 5-0.

Ayes: Goddard, Halik, Isaac, Pigozzi, Sloss
Nays:

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

5. ADJOURNMENT

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

A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved by voice vote 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 pm.

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