



**Community Meeting hosted by Ald. Rue Simmons
Church and Darrow Lot Redevelopment Visioning**

Monday, July 29, 2019
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center
2100 Ridge Ave, Evanston, IL 60201

Staff Present: P. Zalmezak, S. Flax, C. Sterling

1. Welcome

2. City staff presentation

Paul Zalmezak, the Economic Development Manager, led a presentation to explain acquisition, current zoning, and staff recommendations.

He said the property was acquired as part of the West Evanston Master Plan. The first two lots, 1708 and 1710 Darrow are vacant residential acquired by the City 10 years ago. The City recently acquired 1805 Church through deed in lieu of foreclosure. The Law department took Chevron to court and won so they have removed the underground storage tanks from previous gas station use.

This property is part of [sub-area #3](#) in the West Evanston Plan (2007) and the Form Based Code calls for the Church and Darrow property to be either Mixed-Use Building Type - 3 stories with active ground floor retail OR an Iconic Building Type - 2 stories with religious/community/cultural/civic uses. An example of an Iconic Building is the Y.O.U building.

As staff, they recommend not developing condos. Instead they recommend mixed-use with commercial on first floor to support commercial corridor starting at Darrow on east to Y.O.U/ETHS on west

3. Discussion

Concern from a member of the public that this Form Based Zoning does not include input of the neighbors and with this zoning the City does not need to listen or take input seriously from this meeting.

Ald. Rue Simmons reminded everyone that they called this meeting in order to take input and that the staff present want to take it seriously.

After some discussion back and forth with community members, City staff clarified that the current zoning is for B2 but with the Overlay there are two options that can happen right now, the Mixed-Use Building Type - 3 stories with active ground floor retail OR an Iconic Building Type - 2 stories with religious/community/cultural/civic uses. And that in their current recommendation for the Church and Darrow lot, there would be retail/office space on the ground floor and then floors 2-3 and maybe 4 would have less than 40 residential units.

Ald. Rue Simmons welcomed Pastor Wilson. He said they tried to purchase the commercial lot at Church and Darrow but with all those tanks in the ground, it was too expensive. When the City bought that lot, City staff member Sarah Flax informed him and they started to collaborate with the City. He wants senior citizen's housing on that lot, for 40-45 people. And for the new Mt. Pisgah to have vocational training

The granddaughter of Bill Mathews who owned a body shop on Church and Darrow recounted how he used the business from 1929-1980s to support his family and to teach people in the community skills. She believes it should be used for the same kind of thing.

*** The following discussions occurred during the suggestion portion, relocated here for clarity.

After further discussion about the illustrations used in the City's presentation, comment about the need to find the Church/Dodge/Canal/Green Bay neighborhood created plan from when the City was voting on the West End Master Plan. Unclear what time the plan was created, sometime from 2000 to 2005.

Sarah Flax will see if the City has access to the plan.

Further comments about how that plan was validated by a developer in California as a solid plan for neighborhood revitalization and that this plan should be archived.

Ald. Rue Simmons clarified that if this is a resident led and crafted plan and therefore not a City document, the City may not have it but we will work with Sarah and Scott to find it. Also that in the next 5th Ward meeting we will put an agenda item with an explanation of existing TIF and what we are doing right now.

Ald. Rue Simmons asked for a report on who is on the affordable housing wait list, is it families? Is it seniors? Who is most in need. Community Partners for Affordable Housing maintains the list.

Public comment about how much is in the TIF

Paul responds that right now the short answer is zero because of the recession, they recently did an administrative maneuver and hopefully it will have new revenue.

Ald. Rue Simmons said that hopefully in August we will have a solid response to the new situation.

4. Public comment suggestions

- Mt. Pisgah - senior citizen housing and vocational training
- Space to teach people in the community skilled trades
- Building for educating our young people in trade skills
- Recommendation that staff work with Mt. Pisgah
- A shared space with small meeting spaces for organizations or businesses, commercial shared kitchen space, community garden
- Urgent care
- Training for care, a nursing home with training for certified nursing assistants (CNA)
- Work with Oakton community college for a satellite location

Comment that there is an unfilled promise from Oakton for a presence in Y.O.U.

- Affordable housing

Paul commented that we can mandate however many units are affordable housing

- Comment about concern for mandate because mandate is not working at Robert Crown. Therefore does not recommend residential, worried it would turn into luxury.
- More support of Pastor Wilson
- Comment about a City in Florida which pulled resources back in to develop bigger projects instead of giving lots of smaller grants. In 15 years they had built multiple big projects including a community center, affordable housing etc.
- Suggestion for HUD funding to be leveraged through land ownership
- A bank
- Something for our young people, commercial recreation
- Church St. tourism, a planned historical museum as part of reparations

5. Community Announcements

Randy Roebuck says the new classes start October 1st. The Evanston Rebuilding Warehouse training program is a 5-month, full-time, minimum wage paid job training program in building deconstruction and construction trades. Trainees receive comprehensive on-the-job training in addition to instruction in deconstruction,

construction and general life skills that assist with professional and personal growth. For more information, contact Anne Nicklin at Anne@evanstonrebuildingwarehouse.org or 224-267-5708.

Dave Davis, the executive director for neighborhood and community relations from Northwestern, invited everyone to a community picnic on Saturday August 3rd. Picnic starts at 3pm and movie starts at 6pm. At Ryan Field 1501 Central St. Free event, food will be provided.

Ald. Rue Simmons invited everyone to National Night Out on Tues. August 6th for free food, fun including a 22ft high waterslide. There will be a DJ, Target sponsoring and raffling bikes, and many more organizations with resource tables. The event is 5:30-8pm and will end with a candlelight vigil to honor those lost to gun violence.

Dino Robinson from Shorefront Legacy Center announced that the Smithsonian is coming to Evanston for the last week of September and will be in ETHS to help digitize and archive Black families' lives. There will be an online component where you will be able to do it yourself. On the 21st and 22nd you will be able to drop stuff off then pick up the original alongside the digitized version when its done. There is a preparation event called "What's in your attic?" on August 8th at Gibbs Morrison from 6-8pm.

Betty Ester announced a ward meeting on affordable housing, Reclaim Evanston on 7/30 at Family Focus 6:30 pm.

Ald. Rue Simmons announced Ald. Rainey's meeting on the new marijuana legislation at 6:30pm at the Levy Center on 7/30.

Announcement about a pop up where you can correct/renew driver's licenses at Evanston Vineyard from 10am to 2pm on 7/30.

6. Adjournment