DESIGN AND PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE (DAPR) MINUTES
September 18, 2019


Staff Present: M. Rivera

Others Present:

Presiding Member: J. Leonard

A quorum being present, J. Leonard called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

1. September 4, 2019, DAPR Committee meeting minutes.

L. Biggs made a motion to approve the September 4, 2019, meeting minutes, seconded by S. Mangum.

The Committee voted, 6-0, 1 abstention, to approve the September 4, 2019, meeting minutes.

2. September 11, 2019, DAPR Committee meeting minutes.

L. Biggs made a motion to approve the September 11, 2019, meeting minutes, seconded by S. Mangum.

The Committee voted, 6-0, 1 abstention, to approve the September 11, 2019, meeting minutes.

New Business

1. 1605-1631 Chicago Avenue

Subdivision and Major Adjustment to a Planned Development

The applicant, Horizon Realty Group, 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 units from 205 to 186 (includes 65 dwelling units). No new site development allowance will be needed.

2. 1621 Chicago Avenue

Planned Development

The applicant, Horizon Realty Group, submits a planned development application to construct a 19-story apartment building with 240 units, 85 subterranean parking spaces, and approximately 3,540 sq. ft. of ground floor retail space in the D4 Downtown Transition District. Site development allowances are being requested for: 1) a building height of 211 ft. 8 in. where 105 ft. is allowed, 2) an FAR of 11.62 where a maximum of 5.4 is allowed, 3) 240 dwelling units.
where 54 is maximum is allowed, 4) 85 parking spaces where a minimum 185 is required, and 5) 1 short loading berth where 2 short loading berths are required.

APPLICATIONS PRESENTED BY: Jeff Michael, applicant
Tim Kent, architect

DISCUSSION:

- Proposed development is designed to create a senior campus between The Merion and the proposed Marion Legacy. Both buildings will share services and amenities, including staff, counselors, caretakers, health care services, and social activities; there will be an internal connection between both buildings.

- Applicant reviewed their list of public benefits:
  - Contribution of 0.5% of construction budget to public projects.
  - Promote local artists to curate art to display in the building.
  - Environmental site clean-up.
  - One electric vehicle charging station available for public use, additional spaces for building resident use.
  - Provide composting and recycling for building residents.

- Applicant stated the site development allowances requested are in line with other developments.

- J. Leonard asked about where the art will be displayed.
- Applicant stated art would be displayed in common areas of the building.

- J. Leonard clarified the proposed public benefit is promoting local artists and not providing a public art display.

- L. Biggs stated the alley needs to be reconstructed; the estimated cost is $430,000. She asked if recycling is already required by City Code.
- It was noted by the Committee that recycling is required by the City’s refuse franchise agreement.

- S. Mangum stated site clean-up is required in order to develop the site.

- Applicant stated they are proposing a curb cut and loading off Chicago Avenue because it is safer than alternatives, such as loading on the street. Applicant provided a City of Evanston Bike Infrastructure map showing bike routes. Applicant noted existing curb cuts and pedestrian crossings. Applicant reviewed their policy paper in support of a curb cut off Chicago Avenue. Applicant stated the alley is in poor condition, used for commercial activities, and is congested. If there is not a curb cut off Chicago Avenue, the conflict points are not eliminated, just shifted to be on-street or at the street intersection and the street and alley intersection.

- Applicant presented a video of the bike lane along Chicago Avenue and Sheridan Avenue through Northwestern University’s campus, video taken around noon on August 21, 2019. Applicant stated the video shows several existing curb cuts, lack of signage at curb cuts, cars in the bike lane, and other various activities in the bike lane.

- Applicant proposes to install proper signage to identify the proposed curb cut.

- L. Biggs stated concerns with the proposed curb cut have not changed. She noted that standards change over time. She stated it would be difficult to install a bike lane without curb cuts, not all curb cuts should be denied, but the preference is not to have a curb cut cross a bike lane. She stated plan being considered is a new curb cut. She stated the public way is not benefited by the proposed development. She stated the City works to minimize conflicts, the proposed curb cut is located mid-block, traffic should be directed towards existing infrastructure. She noted seniors would have to navigate through several conflict points with a curb cut off Chicago Avenue.
J. Leonard stated it is likely vehicles could be stacked onto the sidewalk with the three spaces in the proposed loading zone. She stated if on-street loading is proposed as an alternative, the plan can be revised and reviewed by staff.

Applicant stated the anticipated traffic volume is low given the number of garage parking spaces.

M. Rivera stated that an on-street loading zone for the proposed development is not acceptable, the City prefers to locate on-street loading zones at the end of a block for general use.

M. Rivera asked if valet parking will be provided and if parking is available to the retail space.

Applicant stated valet parking will be provided, parking garage provides parking to the retail space, and they will lease off-site parking spaces to meet the parking requirement.

S. Mangum stated pedestrian friendly store fronts at street level are preferred over vehicle areas. He stated the site development allowances requested are a big ask, agrees with other staff regarding the curb cut.

Applicant stated they will comply with Pilot 55 LEED Silver bird friendly measures.

M. Jones stated windows overhang into the public street right-of-way, an easement will be required.

S. Mangum asked if a construction value has been determined.

Applicant stated no, not at this time.

S. Mangum asked if the high water table has been addressed related to the proposed underground parking.

Applicant stated they do not have additional details to provide at this time.

Public Comment:

Dennis Harden concerned with the condition of the alley and the cost to repair it, project lacks public benefits, the ask is more than the benefits. He stated he has design concerns, traffic backs up on Chicago Avenue.

Ken Green stated 8-stories is the appropriate height for a transitional area, he stated building heights should step down from downtown, 19-stories is not consistent. He asked if the developer could buy on-street parking spaces for use as their loading.

Sarah Vanderwick noted the City’s affordable housing goal, stated on-site affordable dwellings should be provided.

Leslie Shad stated the City is located along the Mississippi bird fly-way, noted glass balconies are a concern, building height up to 36’ should have 90% bird friendly treatment and height above that should have 60% treatment. She stated lights should be lowered and directed down, a threat calculation should be provided.

Kiera Kelly stated the proposed building height is double what is allowed, if the development is allowed it would undermine trust with residents. She noted several towers have been approved recently. She stated the senior housing development on Oak should be allowed to finish first before other senior housing projects are approved. She stated concern with traffic, the development should meet the current affordable housing regulations, and concerned with loss of storefronts.

Bernard Reilly stated the development degrades the quality of the streetscape, concerned with building shadow, and increases obstacles along Chicago Avenue. He stated public benefits are lacking.

Monique Petan stated construction to occupancy could take 6-7 years given the approaching election, stated the City is turning into Lakeview.

Suzanne Carlson asked who will occupy the building, seniors only? She stated the proposed building height is out of proportion. She stated bird friendly details are needed, concerned with affordable housing.
Zafiro Papastratakis stated building height limits should be maintained, impacts quality of life.

Lori Keenan stated proposed development lowers quality of life, concerned with wind tunnel effects. Demolishing the building adds to landfills. Businesses close with new construction. The historic district should be kept intact, we’re losing the downtown.

S. Mangum stated the developer is proposing to pay the fee-in-lieu of providing on-site affordable dwellings to comply with the IHO.

S. Mangum stated both agenda items are related.

J. Leonard encouraged the applicant to work on addressing issues as the project moves forward.

S. Mangum stated underground parking is a plus but there are several concerns with the project.

S. Mangum made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed subdivision and major adjustment to the Planned Development at 1605-1631 Chicago Avenue, seconded by J. Leonard.

The Committee voted, 8-0, to recommend approval to Plan Commission of the proposed subdivision and major adjustment to the Planned Development at 1605-1631 Chicago Avenue.

S. Mangum made a motion to recommend denial of the proposed 1621 Chicago Avenue Planned Development, seconded by L. Biggs.

The Committee voted, 8-0, to recommend denial to Plan Commission of the proposed 1621 Chicago Avenue Planned Development.

Adjournment
L. Biggs made a motion to adjourn, seconded by S. Mangum. The Committee voted, 8-0, to adjourn. The Committee adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

The next DAPR meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 25, 2019, at 2:30 p.m. in Room 2404 of the Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Griffith