

MINUTES
OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION
OAK PARK VILLAGE HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
April 02, 2009 - 7:00pm

PRESENT: Chairperson Linda Bolte; Commissioners Deborah Fausch,
Vic Guarino, Gail Moran, Susan Roberts, Steve Ruszczuk David Sokol

EXCUSED: Commissioner Michael Quinn

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Failor, Village Planner, Attorney Dick Martens

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order 7:05 pm. Roll called.

PC-0804 Planned Development Application (North Avenue Condominiums)
6603-09 North Avenue; The Applicant seeks approval of a Planned Development for a four (4) story, 18 dwelling unit residential condominium development with ground floor parking. The application contains the following allowance requests from the Oak Park Zoning Ordinance. 1. A 20 foot reduction in the required front yard per section 3.6.3 (B-1) which requires a 20 foot front yard setback; 2.A - 20.25 foot reduction in the required rear yard (to 14 feet 9 inches) per 3.6.3(B-2) which requires a 10 foot interior side yard setback; 4. A 10 foot 5 inch foot increase in the allowable building height to 55 feet 5 inches per 3.8.3(A-2) which restricts the maximum height to 45 feet; 5. A 9% decrease in the required permeable area per 3.6.3C) where 25% is required leaving 16% open space. 6. A 27% increase in building coverage per 3.6.3 (C) where 45% is allowed, equaling 72% building coverage; 7. A reduction in the number of shrubs and trees along North Avenue per 6.4.2(A); and 8. An increase in density to 18 units where 12 units are allowed per 3.6.3(A-1-b). **OPEN PUBLIC HEARING- Continuation from March 19, 2009.**

Applicant, John Scheiss, 905 South Home, project architect, was sworn in by Attorney Martens. At the last meeting, Mr. Scheiss showed a power point presentation to demonstrate new renderings reflecting changes suggested by commissioners at the last meeting.

Modifications to the original application included the following:

- Reduced building by 5' in N-S direction – setback increased to 19'9"
- Relocated loading berth to provide a landscape buffer along alley
- Added 5' high wrought iron fence along east property line with gate
- Added 5' high wrought iron fence along west property line

- Removed 4' walk at rear property line to accommodate a denser landscape buffer
- Two parking spaces converted to compact car spaces
- Added bike rack storage for six bikes (15% of occupants as required by LEEDS)
- Added additional windows to middle units
- Building height reduced by 6' to 49'5"
- Floor to ceiling height for 2nd to 4th floor reduced from 12' to 10'
- Changed material of stair towers to utility block
- Added renaissance stone pattern, rustication
- Added multi-colored tiles to stair towers

Samples of the brick and ceramic tiles were passed around for commissioners to view. For those who did not know the term *rustication*, Mr. Scheiss explained that the term *rustication* refers to arranging the recession of a section of brick in to create a shadow line.

Mr. Scheiss said he was also considering a skylight in the stair tower.

LEEDS points were recalculated to a total of 32, putting the project in the certified category from 26-32. Mr. Scheiss explained that the final tally of points depends on some variables.

The zoning analysis was then discussed and Mr. Scheiss noted the following changes (reductions) in allowances requested.

	<u>Required</u>	<u>Requested</u>
<u>Lot coverage</u>	25%	21%
<u>Lot coverage-Building</u>	45%	69%
<u>Maximum height</u>	45%	49.5%
<u>Setback – south</u>	25'	19'9"

In response to a question from Commissioner Moran, Mr. Scheiss said the proposal is for 18 units. He explained the calculation for the LEEDS points for bike storage was based upon the assumption of 2.5 occupants in a two-bedroom, and 1.5 occupants in a one-bedroom. The 15% would equal six bikes; however Mr. Scheiss pointed out that by stacking, twelve bikes could actually be stored.

Commissioner Sokol liked the idea of a skylight in the stair tower but wondered about possible leakage in rainy weather. Mr. Scheiss explained that technology has greatly improved in this regard.

Commissioner Sokol said the revised appearance with tiles, rustication, etc. is an improvement and this structure would be an asset to the community.

Chair Bolte asked if the ceiling height would allow for parking lifts, should the condo association at some time want to install these. Mr. Scheiss said it would. But that his experience with the Opera Club was that technical improvements and more safeguards are needed. Chair Bolte asked if the parking spaces are long enough that a bike rack could be placed in front of the space. Mr. Scheiss stated that a standard size car could fit with a bike rack or some sort of storage, but that would be up to the condo association. Mr. Scheiss described an alternative method, which raises storage above parking spaces. Commissioner Ruszczuk asked whether parking spots are a common element of the condo association. Mr. Scheiss said that generally spots are ownership specific to a particular unit.

Commissioner Guarino asked about proposed unit size and cost. Mr. Scheiss said costs would range from \$225,000 to \$315,000. Corner units would measure 1200 square feet and middle units, 900 square feet.

Commissioner Fausch asked about the color of the prairie stone. Mr. Scheiss passed around a sample. Commissioner Fausch said the elevations look better, but she felt there were too many colors and textures. She asked whether Mr. Scheiss would give thought to changing the color of the prairie stone, or another feature. Mr. Scheiss said the building springs from the Bohemian period. It is on the edge of town, so there is not a lot of context. He stated that the building moves forward with its own aesthetic. Commissioner Fausch wondered if the units might be more marketable with fewer colors and textures. The applicant will report back to the commission on his findings, after discussion with the realtors. There was discussion about using either all stucco or all wood siding, instead of using both.

Asked about tile size, Mr. Scheiss said there would be groupings of four 4x4 tiles. He said this type of pattern was used on Euclid Square.

Motion

Commissioner Sokol moved to direct Attorney Martens to draw up Findings of Fact to approve the variance requests based on the design submitted at this hearing (plus investigating the possibility of a skylight in the stair tower.) Commissioner Ruszczuk seconded the motion. Discussion followed and the motion was clarified to include meeting LEEDS certification standards, landscaping, the use of either all stucco or all wood siding, construction debris removal, access from the alley and North Avenue and a 24 hour contact person during the construction period. Commissioner Ruszczuk agreed to the clarification on the motion.

Commissioner Guarino stated for the record that he had listened to the tape of the previous meeting. He wondered whether the LEEDS standards would be enough to compensate for the higher density and lot coverage.

Commissioner Sokol stated that the current strip of land is a blighted area and given past usage, as well as what could be done “by right”, this is preferable and would benefit the community. Commissioner Roberts felt the pricing was good. Commissioner Moran said she agreed with Commissioner Sokol.

A roll call vote was taken.

Sokol – yes

Ruszczuk – yes

Guarino – yes

Moran – yes

Roberts – yes

Fausch – yes

Bolte – yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Roberts commended Mr. Scheiss for working in cooperation with the community.

Minutes

Approval of minutes from March 5th and March 19th was postponed until the next meeting.

There was discussion about the commission calendar. On April 16th, the Findings of Fact on the application for stadium lights at OPRF will be presented and voted upon. Also scheduled is a public hearing for Walgreen’s proposal for the present Sears Pharmacy property.

The Village Manager has requested that the commission hold a special meeting to begin the public hearing on the proposed Highland/Madison project. Commissioner Moran wondered why the board wanted this now. Mr. Failor said it has been on the table for a while and the board approved the sales contract for the property. The Village Manager felt that in view of economic conditions, it would be good to get the project started.

Chair Bolte asked whether the Walgreen’s proposal would present any big issues. Mr. Failor said the Neighbors for Madison Renewal have generally supported the project. Commissioner Moran asked if there would be a drive-through, stating this would be

controversial. Mr. Failor said neighbors are aware a drive through is planned and Walgreen's has proposed an 8' wall with landscaping. Instead of a speaker system, customers will order right at the window.

After some discussion, the following meeting schedule was agreed upon:

April 16th – Findings of Fact, high school lights; open public hearing for Walgreen's.

May 7th - Findings of Fact, North Avenue project, begin hearing on Madison/Highland.

May 21st – Continuation (possible conclusion) Walgreen's, if time allows – continuation of Madison/Highland hearing.

The motion was made to adjourn this meeting to reconvene on May 7th. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Rules of Procedure/Transcript responsibility

Mr. Failor informed commissioners that the Village had spent \$20,000 on transcripts for the hearings on stadium lights. He asked the commission to consider whether applicants should be charged the total cost or a portion of the cost for transcriptions. Commissioner Moran asked if other communities had been surveyed on this issue. Attorney Martens stated that typically the applicant pays for the court reporter and for transcripts. Commissioner Moran asked whether the Village had requested transcripts. Mr. Failor stated that the Village requests transcripts on controversial issues. A court reporter is always present for a public hearing, but transcripts are not always ordered. Commissioner Moran felt it would be inequitable to make the applicant bear the entire cost. Mr. Failor noted that in the stadium light case, both the applicant and the opposition got transcripts.

Commissioner Roberts asked whether the presence of a court reporter is required. Attorney Martens said the meeting can be recorded, and a transcript can be made from the tape recording, but this does not generally work well. There was some question about whether the text is the property of the village or of the court reporter. Attorney Martens said such text is the property of the Village. Attorney Martens noted that applicants can submit FOIAs for transcripts.

Chair Bolte suggested that tonight's hearing was not one that would require a court reporter. She suggested that in the future, court reporters be contracted only in complex or controversial cases.

Mr. Scheiss noted that other communities charge developers an escrow fee going in, to cover transcripts and other charges. He stated that River Forest charges a minimum of \$10,000, and this figure could double. (This includes items such as outside engineering reviews.) Forest Park charges \$7,500 per application. Mr. Failor stated that Barrington charges a \$20,000 deposit.

Mr. Scheiss said that this is the only community he knows of that gives away free transcripts. Commissioner Moran felt it would be unfair to charge the applicant the entire amount when the process can be lengthened by opposition. Mr. Scheiss noted that a small case would require a small escrow, as opposed to a project such as Whiteco which would require a large amount.

Commissioner Sokol felt that more information would be needed for the commission to make a recommendation on this matter. Mr. Failor was asked to find out what neighboring communities do in this regard. Attorney. Martens stated that an escrow requirement would have to be done by ordinance. Commissioner Roberts suggested that charging a fee for services might have caused the high school to work harder with the neighbors to reach an agreement on stadium lights. Commissioner Ruszczyk said the high school was an unusual case. Chair Bolte recalled that other cases have taken a lot of time, and a lot of staff time. Commissioner Moran asked if past transcripts costs could be researched. Mr. Failor stated that this is not a separate line item and that all boards and commissions are grouped together. Commissioner Fausch suggested building in the ability to tailor the charge according to each situation.

Chair Bolte spoke about sharing of costs at the discretion of the Village Planner. Attorney Martens noted it would be difficult to get objectors to pay. Discussion on this issue will be continued at another meeting. (Mr. Failor will not be in attendance on April 16th).

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Liz Melara

Recording Secretary

APPROVED April 16, 2009