

**APPROVED MINUTES
OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION
OAK PARK VILLAGE HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
April 16, 2009 - 7:00pm**

PRESENT: Chairperson Linda Bolte; Commissioners Deborah Fausch, Vic Guarino, Gail Moran, Michael Quinn, Susan Roberts, Steve Ruszczyk and David Sokol

ALSO PRESENT: Bob Clements, Redevelopment Manager (for Craig Failor, Village Planner)
Attorney Dick Martens

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order 7:00 pm. Roll called.

MINUTES

Commissioner Sokol moved to approve the March 5th minutes as amended. Motion seconded by Commissioner Quinn. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Moran moved to approve the March 19th minutes as amended. Motion seconded by Commissioner Sokol. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Moran moved to approve the April 2nd minutes as amended. Motion seconded by Commissioner Ruszczyk. Motion passed unanimously.

**FINDINGS OF FACT PC 08-03
(Special Use and Zoning Text Amendment) Light Standards)**

Attorney Martens read through the Findings of Fact for the above application. Commissioner Moran complimented Attorney Martens on the well drafted document.

Commissioner Quinn moved to approve the Findings of Fact as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Sokol. Motion passed unanimously.

At this time, Commissioner Guarino joined the other commissioners.

PUBLIC HEARING

PC-09-02: Planned Development Application (Walgreen's): The Applicant seeks approval of a Planned Development for a multi-tenant commercial development with the following allowance requests: 1. Section 3.9.6(E)(1)(a): front yard setback of not less than three (3) feet and not more than five (5) feet, for structures and buildings between Harlem Avenue and Oak Park Avenue and a front yard/corner side yard setback of not less than five (5) feet and not more than fifteen (15) feet along the north/south cross street of Oak Park Avenue; 2. Section 3.9.6(F)(3): a special use permit for a drive through located at the south side of the proposed building; 3. Section 3.9.6(G)(1)(a): all off-street parking shall be located behind

buildings with no exposure to Madison Street or side streets; 4. Section 6.4.2 (A): building setback along Madison Street and Oak Park Avenue be planted with a minimum of one (1) tree and ten (10) shrubs per 40 linear feet of setback area; 5. Section 6.2.1 (D): a fence along the southern property line to screen the off-street parking spaces from the residential district across the alley to the south, and 6. Section 6.4.3 (C) Minimum Dimensional Standards: requires that all parking lots containing more than five (5) parking spaces shall be screened from public streets and sidewalks by complying with one of four (4) perimeter landscaping options.
OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

Chair Bolte explained the process which would begin with applicant testimony and evidence, followed by commissioner questions, cross-examination of witnesses; testimony in favor of the application, testimony opposed, and neutral. Cross examination of other witnesses by the applicant of other witnesses, and finally a staff report.

All those present, wishing to testify were sworn in by Attorney Martens. Chair Bolte reminded commissioners that due to the application date, the commission would be operating under the old planned development regulations.

Applicant Testimony

Jay Javors, Midwest Group

Mr. Javors explained the application is for the adaptive re-use of the Collins Building at 801-11 Madison. The project has been in the works for over two years. In the beginning this was to be a build by-right development. After consulting with various groups in the community and with staff, alternate suggestions were considered. Then the Madison Street Overlay District was approved. The applicants have met with the Madison Street Coalition and the Neighbors for Madison Street Renewal. The final plan is a result of those meetings with an effort made to please everyone as much as possible.

On March 2nd, 2009, a neighborhood meeting was held at Fox Park. Twenty-five neighbors attended. The applicants were pleased with the positive response; the addition to the west end of the project was well-received.

Ted Theodore, Cambura and Theodore Architects, gave some background on his architectural firm and showed a power point presentation. Pictures of the property as it appeared in the years 1890, 1891, 1967 and 2009 were displayed. Views of the surrounding area were also shown, along with aerial views, current and proposed. The proposed main entry is off Madison Street. The addition is designed to complement but not copy the existing building. Display posters were shown.

The length of the building would be shortened by 24'. Building materials would include limestone, grey brick, and bronze aluminum window frames. Trucks access would be from Oak Park Avenue. New sidewalks would be installed. A continuous fence would run along the alley and the parking lot would be screened with large and small scale landscaping. A drive-thru at the south façade would feature a 9' high, 20' long wall. Sound would be blocked by the wall and the landscaping. Amenities would include brick

pavers, bicycle racks, outdoor seating, and staggered walls. The traffic report has been completed and submitted to the Village.

Commissioner Sokol asked about square footage and Commissioner Fausch asked why the second floor would not be used. Commissioner Moran asked about non-Walgreen's parking spaces, a marketing plan, and signage. Mr. Javors said these questions would be addressed by the next speakers.

Jean Follett, Historic Preservation Consultant, 325 Bonnie Brae, Hinsdale

Ms. Follett said the building is a great historical one and the goal is to save it. She noted that it is unusual for a national chain to take on such a project. As for the second floor, the issue is ceiling height. The original building is L shaped. Ms. Follett compared the upper floor to a rabbit warren, with very tight quarters and a low ceiling height. The corner retail store will have higher ceilings. Ms. Follett said that the Hall Printing Building next door would be a "nothing" building if not for the terra cotta. Technically, the building is not a landmark.

Ms. Follett stated that the drive-thru is an essential of this business model and that the widening of the alley was requested by the Village. Usually buildings are separated by elevations. In this case, each building "holds its own".) Commissioner Moran asked if the Historic Preservation Commission had offered alternatives. Ms. Follett said the commission was "split down the middle" between doing something very modern and reconstruction, salvaging brick from the bay being demolished to wrap around to the new building.

Commissioner Ruszczyk spoke and asked if the façade of the Collins being could be imitated. Ms. Follett said the idea is not to mimic but rather to go together. The new building is modern and should be visually separate. Commissioner Sokol concurred.

Bill Greive, Senior Engineer for Hamilton Associates showed power point graphics of truck access, the delivery alley to be widened to 22'. The drive-thru would go one way east (entered from the west side of the building) with an escape lane. The service dock will be inside (dumpsters, unloading, etc.) There will be 35 spaces plus on-street parking. As for other retail space, that will be something complementary to Walgreen's, a service business, not retail. Traffic, parking, access and circulation can be integrated successfully. Commissioner Sokol said there would be nothing to stop people from exiting on Grove Avenue. Mr. Javors said it will be revisited to make sure the plans are workable.

Mr. Javors spoke about meeting with various constituencies and how neighbors want one thing while the Madison Street Business Coalition wants something different.

Commissioner Moran asked about delivery time in the mornings. Mr. Javors said the service area activity is very limited, at the most, 2 or 3 days a week. Otherwise, there are small truck deliveries and deliveries are scheduled as much as possible for off times.

Commissioner Moran brought up a letter from a neighbor about traffic in the north/south alley. Mr. Javors said there would be a DO NOT ENTER sign. The Village Engineer said it could not be closed off. At a neighborhood meeting, residents at the north end of the alley did not want it closed off. As for parking for other retail, there is street parking available. (Currently the Walgreen's at the present location has 22 or 24 spots, which it shares with Radio Shack and other businesses on the block).

Commissioner Fausch asked who would select the tenant for the vacant storefront. Mr. Javors stated the developer will, and they are looking for a "softer" type of retail use, not a coffee shop. Commissioner Fausch said she would like to see a coffee shop there, something that would be an asset to that corner. Commissioner Roberts spoke about a letter from a neighbor talking about speed bumps. There will be some in the alley, plus there will be money in escrow to make any corrections needed.

Commissioner Ruszczuk asked about parking on Oak Park and Madison. There are four spaces on Oak Park Avenue and five on Madison. Commissioner Ruszczuk asked how the lot would be policed. Mr. Javors said they would probably use tow signs, and asked Mr. Church to address this.

Zachary Church, Walgreen Company, 200 Wilmont Road, Deerfield

Mr. Church spoke about the exciting opportunity, to replace an existing store which is old and outdated and does not serve the needs of the community. He said people want convenient parking and access, and drive-thrus. Walgreen's is trying to balance the needs of all concerned. The option on the existing store is up in 2012, so they would like to expedite this project.

Commissioner Moran noted that the Historic Preservation Commission commented on the "busy" quality of the entrance. She asked if there were any consideration given to modifying the signage. Mr. Church stated that signage is the lifeblood of any retailer, and in this case was developed with consultants. Mr. Javors noted that signage has already been reduced; the current site has an LED sign. Mr. Theodore said there was no mention of signage at the neighborhood meetings. He said the signage is minimal and the script signage is relatively small.

Testimony in favor

Linda Hill, 521 South Grove, Neighbors for Madison Renewal

Ms. Hill recalled a presentation by the developer on March 2nd, and said that the new drawings are much better than the originals. However, the neighbors are still concerned about issues related to traffic and would like to encourage north bound turns onto Madison. They would like utilities to be underground and to have the addition of traffic calming devices. They are concerned about what will come in to the retail space, but all in all this is a better process than that which previously took place in the neighborhood. They support the landscaping and the escrow fund.

Testimony opposed - none

Neutral testimony

James Haenert, 519 South Grove (directly south of Walgreen's parking lot)

Mr. Haenert urged the commission to keep in mind volume of traffic, effect of noise and lighting and separation of residential and commercial. He was in favor of the fence and landscaping on the north side of the property. He has spoken to Mr. Javors. Mr. Javors stated that the end of the alley next to Mr. Haenert's property can be modified.

Sean Kruger, 512 South Grove

Mr. Kruger stated he is not opposed to the project and likes the marriage of old and new, and the new business this will bring to the area. His concern was the east-west alley and the traffic that will be generated. He spoke about limiting the use of the alley to residents and deliveries. Regarding the separation of commercial and residential he did not want the fence removed. As for the retail business on the corner, he was in favor of a coffee shop, which would be conducive to the neighborhood, but did not want to see a cell phone store or a currency exchange there. He was in favor of blocking off the north/south alley and noted that there was only one person against it. He wondered if this might be re-considered. Chair Bolte said the six month after-study will look at this and other issues. Mr. Javors noted that the Village Engineer had not approved of blocking that alley.

Mike Awe, 517 South Grove, Neighbors for Madison Renewal

Mr. Awe felt that overall, a good job was done on the design, but the west side of the building is too high. There is a cul de sac at the current site, and he was not in favor of a cul de sac on Grove. The reason for that cul de sac was the neighbors' concerns with traffic. The six month study is a good idea and should include a neighborhood meeting. The escrow fund should not be only for traffic but for any related needs.

Testimony Closed

Applicant Summary

Mr. Javors and Mr. Theodore spoke about the good communication with all involved. Not everyone will be 100% happy, but the applicants did their best. This will be a good project for the neighborhood.

Commissioner Moran asked about drive-thru hours. Mr. Javors said these would be the same as pharmacy hours, one hour later opening than the store. Possibly 8am – 8pm Monday through Friday; Saturday 9am-5pm and Sunday 9am – 4pm.

Commissioner Roberts asked about the old Walgreen's store. The applicant said that is privately owned and the lease will be up in 2011. It will likely be re-developed and is a "hot commodity" with parking.

Commissioner Guarino asked what guarantee there would be that the business model would not change to 24 hour operation. Attorney Martens noted that by ordinance they are limited to 7am to midnight. Mr. Church said that although hours could change, they will comply with the ordinance.

Commissioner Fausch asked about reusing existing brick to do a “coining” similar to the Oak Park façade. Mr. Theodore said they could do these three or four feet long. Commissioner Fausch recommended this treatment.

CDC Recommendations included 3” caliper trees, coordination with neighbors to the southwest, replacement of sod on neighboring property and close monitoring of boxwood plants. (There will be irrigation for all landscaping.) Commissioner Fausch noted that the CDC recommendations are already a part of the plan. Chair Bolte said that citizen comments regarding screening should be included in conditions. Commissioner Moran said that coordination with neighbors should also be included.

MOTION

Commissioner Quinn stated it was a very good proposal and moved to direct Attorney Martens to develop the Findings of Fact with the following three additions:

- 1) Plans revised to include Commissioner Fausch’s recommendation for “coining” on the south end of Oak Park Avenue
- 2) Fencing and landscaping along the south end of the East/West alley and
- 3) Escrow to fund the traffic study six months after the opening, and any other necessary revisions (with the input of neighbors at a neighborhood meeting.)

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Moran

Commissioner Sokol expressed concern about the HPC comment that the south elevation drive through is monolithic and without detail. Mr. Theodore said that changes had been made in response to those comments. As for the suggestions to include windows, this cannot be done, as there is shelving on the other side.

Commissioner Ruszczuk recalled discussion on the use of an alley for ingress/egress on Oak Park Avenue, and wondered why this would be different. Commissioner Quinn said in that case the drive thru access by the alley did not exist. This is an existing alley that is being widened. Commissioner Guarino noted that the bank alley would be used by many businesses, and in this case only Walgreen would use it. Commissioner Quinn went on to state that since they could not have a curb cut on Madison; they are doing what they can.

Commissioner Guarino mentioned doing something to break up the sidewalk, looking at the big wall. Mr. Theodore said they are looking at that.

Commissioner Guarino said there has been a problem with litter at the Walgreen's on Roosevelt and Ridgeland and said there should be monitoring of this. (There will be garbage cans.)

Mr. Theodore will send the new 4' wall plan to Craig Failor.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

Sokol – yes; Guarino – yes; Ruszczyk – yes; Bolte – yes; Moran – yes; Quinn – yes;

Fausch – yes; Roberts – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Bolte commended the applicant for making an effort to accommodate the concerns of all. Findings of Fact will be presented on May 21st.

The next meeting will be on May 7th. Findings of Fact for the North Avenue Condo Project will be presented and there will be a public hearing on the Highland/Madison application.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Guarino moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Quinn seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Liz Melara

Recording Secretary