

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

PRESENT: Chairperson Linda Bolte; Commissioners Gary Belenke, Deborah Fausch, Vic Guarino, Gail Moran, Michael Quinn, Susan Roberts, Steven Rouse

EXCUSED: Commissioner Steve Ruszczuk

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Failor, Village Planner; Attorney Dick Martens
Mary Jo Schuler (via telephone)

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order. Roll called.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made and seconded to approve the June 18 minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING PC 09-01: Planned Development Application (Highland Madison LLC) Continuation

Chair Bolte stated that the materials requested at the last meeting had been submitted to the commission. Mr. Failor distributed the materials to other interested parties. The materials included elevations and the report by Mr. Grimes on property values.

Nevin Hedlund, 7985 Lake Street, River Forest, project architect showed the amended pieces of the original power point and new exhibits, different views of the proposed development as requested by the commission. The metal grillwork was removed. The views included:

- A rear perspective looking down, showing the parking deck
- A rendering from the northeast corner
- Winter scene with updated elevation
- Spring and summer renderings

Mr. Hedlund provided delivery information received from Café Winberie's and Bar Louie, which showed 10 to 14 deliveries per week.

Mr. Grimes, whose report on property values was submitted, was not available to come to this meeting due to illness. Mr. Hedlund summarized the report looking at the effects on

property values of a mixed use development on a major corridor. Mr. Grimes looked at the development on Madison in Forest Park, which houses Starbucks and has residential above. He found no adverse effects on neighboring property values.

Commissioners questioned how this particular development was selected and whether it was really comparable to the proposed development being discussed. Mr. Hedlund stated that Mr. Grimes looked at various properties and found this one to be the most comparable as it was a redevelopment on a commercial corridor, with little other changes around it.

It was pointed out that the Forest Park development contains mixed use, residential and commercial where this one does not. Mr. Hedlund said that there was no retail/commercial development in Oak Park to which it could be compared.

Asked about parking, Mr. Hedlund said the first level would be open to the public, with the use of meters or a meter box. The second level would have controlled access, with use of a gate and a key card for tenants. Entering at the second level, tenants could take the elevator up or down. Asked about the accessibility for people on foot, Mr. Hedlund noted that any gate would allow people to get around it. He noted that the gate would slow traffic coming out, making it safer for pedestrians.

Commissioners inquired about a fence or an overhead door. Mr. Hedlund said an overhead door would slow cars down more than a gate and cars would back up. There is no guarantee that people can not walk in.

The second floor parking would also provide overnight permit parking spaces for residents. Drop off for the gymnastics center would be on the first floor only. Mr. Hedlund stated that leases and sales of parking spaces are fundamental to the project.

CROSS EXAMINATION

John Murphy, 537 South Highland said he had questions regarding the methodology of Mr. Grimes' report. Chair Bolte said he should ask the questions even though Mr. Grimes was not present, so that they could go on the record, for follow-up. Mr. Murphy listed the following questions:

- What was the methodology used?
- What did Mr. Grimes view the assignment to be?
- How did Mr. Grimes decide on the comparable?
- What other developments were looked at and excluded?
- If excluded, why?
- What was the basis for concluding that development to be similar to the Madison/Highland proposal?

- Were the dis-similarities considered? If so, what were they?
- Of the three properties he picked out, how were they selected over others in the area?

Commissioners suggested there were more likely comparables in other areas such as North Avenue in Elmwood Park and Chicago.

Warren Schmaus, 521 South Highland, said he would like to see information not only on the values of neighboring property, but specifically on rehabbed properties.

Chair Bolte told Mr. Hedlund that the commission would like Mr. Grimes to look at other non-residential projects and said that public comment would be concluded at this hearing. Upon objection from resident **Ethan Israelsohn** to the closing of public comment, Chair Bolte explained further public comment will be allowed but it would be limited to any new information presented by Mr. Grimes.

New witnesses were sworn in by Attorney Martens.

Michael Kucharski, 545 S. Harvey, fairly new to the block, stated that he was happy to see new construction in the area but did have concerns about traffic. He proposed there be a cul de sac or a barrier to direct the traffic toward Madison, expressing concerns about the many young children on the block.

He was also concerned about where snow and ice on the parking deck would be offloaded. As for the garage doors, he said there are some that go up faster than a gate and are safer.

Mr. Hedlund pointed out that all traffic must go north to Madison, both on Highland and on Harvey.

Commissioner Quinn pointed out that the applicant wanted a cul de sac, but the objection came from the police and fire departments. Mr. Kucharski felt there were sufficient main arteries within the three block area, Ridgeland, Lombard, and Adams. Commissioner Moran pointed out that if there were cul de sacs on each end, this would send local traffic through the alley.

Warren Schmaus spoke about the elimination of the parking overpass. He mentioned the “claustrophobic feel” and the drainage leaking to the sidewalk below. He pointed out that the high school garage is already showing such problems. He also expressed concerns about children dropping things on cars from the overpass, the presence of panhandlers, and the possible under-utilization of the parking because people will naturally seek free parking on the street. As far as the tax revenue provided by the project, Mr. Schmaus said estimated about \$50 more per taxpayer per year would equal the revenue from this development. He stated that he would much prefer to pay the extra \$50 rather than having this development constructed as proposed.

Chris Pavolacci, 512 South Harvey, said her front door will face the parking structure. She was concerned that this project, along with Dunkin Donuts will cause cars to line up along Harvey, where her parking space is. She was concerned about the increased traffic flow. She also brought up questions about security, lighting, and delivery traffic. She wondered about bumping out the curb to avoid the loss of parking on their street.

Ethan Israelsohn, 518 S. Highland, spoke about the drop-off system for the gymnastics center. He felt that people will not pay for parking when there are other options and this will result in the loss of parking spaces for residents on Highland.

Donna Andree, 511 S. Highland, asked where trash containers would be kept for the restaurant. Mr. Hedlund said they would be enclosed and covered by a masonry fence. Ms. Andree felt that without a barrier, traffic will go through on Highland.

John Murphy, 537 South Highland, suggested that free parking on the surface lot would address these problems.

This concluded public comment. Any further public comment will be limited to the new appraisal report.

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS

Chair Bolte called for non-parking questions first. Commissioner Moran asked about lighting under the bridge and security monitoring. Mr. Hedlund said there will be photometric lighting under and on top of the garage. Safety, security and light drop-off at property lines will be provided. There will be remotely monitored cameras, and police would be called as needed. There will be no trucks on the upper level. Trucks will use a specific loading zone. Regarding drop off of children for the gymnastics center, Mr. Hedlund demonstrated the ingress, the door to the elevator to the third floor. He noted that he could not comment on how parents would handle such drop-offs.

Mr. Hedlund stated that snow will be removed completely from the ramp and will not be dumped outside the boundaries of the development. Mr. Hedlund agreed to look at garage door technology. As for parking, Mr. Hedlund said that the availability of parking behind the offices is an attraction for tenants.

Commissioner Fausch asked about a third level of parking on the east side. It was noted that the Village Board disapproved of such a plan. As for free parking on the ground floor, Mr. Hedlund said this would not be viable. He said they would work to limit overflow on to residential streets. Asked about the percentage of income that would come from parking, Mr. Hedlund stated he would get that information.

Mas Takaguchi, a partner in the proposed development said there had been discussion with the Village about providing overnight permit parking on the ground floor.

Asked about narrowing the overpass to 20' wide instead of 60', Mr. Hedlund said this would limit the number of parking spaces and would not really make a big difference in the effect of the overpass. Chair Bolte noted that this would also force the applicant to

seek a greater variance on parking. She asked Mr. Failor to summarize village code related to parking, and the drop-off situation/parking availability of the current gymnastic center. Mr. Failor said the Zoning code requirement for retail is one parking space per 500' and for retail space – one parking space per .75 employees. The calculation of the number of employees was based on the building department occupancy rate, and so may be high. As for the current gymnastics center, there is no on-site parking. There is a Village lot across the street which some parents use. Most park on the street or on side streets. Some parents just drop off and pick up their kids. There are many on-street parking spaces available.

Chair Bolte asked whether the applicant had given any thought to requiring a vacation of the alley on the west to put a mini-deck there. Mr. Hedlund said the alley width is not sufficient there. Commissioner Fausch asked about the possibility of 15 minutes parking spaces for drop-off. Mr. Hedlund said this could be discussed with the Park District.

Chair Bolte noted that the commission's calendar is filling up. Issues to come before the commission include the Roosevelt Road Overlay, a Bed & Breakfast amendment, and the Lake & Forest development. Commissioners agreed on the following schedule:

August 6th (receive report from Mr. Grimes (e-mail to neighbors))

August 20th – Continuation of hearing

September 3rd – Roosevelt Road meeting

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made, seconded and passed to adjourn the meeting.

Motion adjourned 9pm.

Transcribed from CD.

Liz Melara, Recording Secretary