

CITY OF WEST CHICAGO

WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET

MINUTES

Development Committee

January 13, 2014

APPROVED AT THE FEBRUARY 10, 2014 MEETING

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Establishment of a Quorum

Chairman Stout called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll call found Aldermen John Banas, James Beifuss, Laura Grodoski, Alan Murphy, Jim Smith, John Smith and Rebecca Stout present.

Also in attendance were Director of Community Development John D. Said and City Planner Jeff Harris.

2. Public Participation

Alderman Fuesting stated that he is in support of rezoning the Elm Road area to R-1 Single Family Residential because the current ORI zoning is making it difficult for the existing property owners to sell their properties. He also stated that the dynamics of the real estate market have vastly changed since these properties were annexed into the City in 2002, thus making the chances for industrial redevelopment of this area consistent with the ORI zoning unlikely.

3. Items for Consent

None.

4. Items for Discussion

A. Elm Road – Zoning Review.

Chairman Stout requested staff to provide a brief overview. Mr. Said provided an update in accordance with the Agenda Item Summary. He noted that due to various conditions, City staff doubts that this area will be viable for ORI-oriented development in the future. The lack of public utilities and infrastructure, isolated location, wetlands, stable property conditions (minimal “for sale” signs), limited redevelopment area and limited access all negatively affect future opportunities for redevelopment to ORI-type uses.

Because of these challenges, ORI-oriented development has not taken place and existing uses will likely remain in the future. Therefore, City staff recommends a change in zoning for this area to establish reasonable consistency between existing uses and zoning district regulations.

Alderman Murphy asked if the proposed rezoning of the North Avenue properties to B-2 General Business District conflicts with the types of existing businesses on these properties.

Staff responded that the existing business along North Avenue were industrial type uses with outdoor storage, which does not conform with the proposed B-2 zoning regulations or the existing ORI zoning regulations. The existing uses would be best suited for the Manufacturing zoning district; however that zoning district is not appropriate for this area. The existing uses would remain legal non-conforming, but staff feels that having the underlying zoning as B-2 would make the properties more marketable for future redevelopment.

Alderman Banas asked for clarification between the proposed R-1 and B-2 zoned parcels and stated that he concurs with the recommended changes to the zoning of this area.

Alderman Beifuss also concurred with the recommended changes in zoning and indicated that it would be a much greater benefit to the residents of this area.

Chairman Stout stated that the proposed rezoning seems like a good compromise to start the rezoning process with given the current conditions of the area. She asked the Committee members if staff should proceed with the proposed rezoning and the Committee members unanimously agreed.

B. The Crusher – 651 W. Washington Street, Zoning Review.

Chairman Stout requested staff to provide a brief overview. Mr. Said stated that staff has analyzed the situation and determined that there are three potential amendments to the Zoning Code that Mr. Neumeier could pursue to allow him to expand his Salvage and Recycling Facility (SRF) operations onto the newly acquired property:

1. Reduce the SRF separation requirements from residential zoning/uses from 400 feet to 300 feet.

The downside to this proposed amendment is that it would make requirements less restrictive for the establishment of another SRF within the City.

2. Amend how the SRF separation requirements are measured. Currently the measurement is taken from the closest property line of the SRF to closest property line of the use it must be separated from. An amendment could allow measurement from the base of the SRF's storage yard screen wall/fence to the property line of the use it must be separated from. This amendment would allow The Crusher to utilize its entire property by reconfiguring the proposed layout of his site to put all of its stormwater detention facilities along the east lot line, thus creating a green space buffer within the required 400 foot separation buffer that encroaches onto the newly acquired property.

Similar to Option 1 above, the downside to this proposed amendment is that it would make requirements less restrictive for establishment of another SRF within the City.

3. Add a reduction in the SRF separation requirements to the list of the City's permitted variances. This would then require Mr. Neumeier to obtain a variance to reduce the current 400 foot separation from a residential use/zoning. As part of his variance request Mr. Neumeier could reconfigure the proposed layout of the site to put all of the stormwater detention facilities along the east lot line, thus creating a green space buffer within the required 400 foot separation buffer that encroaches onto the newly acquired property. This site redesign would aid in justification of approving the variance request by complying with the spirit and intent of the separation requirement.

The downside to this proposed amendment is that, in City staff's opinion, Mr. Neumeier does not meet the City's established findings of fact standards to warrant variance approval.

Alderman Banas indicated he prefers Option 2 because it still complies with the spirit and intent of providing the 400 foot buffer.

The applicant's civil engineer, Ben Bussman of Webster, McGrath & Ahlberg, showed the Committee various site plans based on the options presented and the proposed development of the site.

Alderman Beifuss stated that whichever option is pursued it will change the regulations for all SRFs.

David Neumeier, the owner of The Crusher, stated that their goal with the expansion of their facility is to provide nothing but greenspace outside of the facility's screen wall and to make the site look as aesthetically pleasing as possible.

Alderman Banas reiterated that he is in favor of Option 2 because of the additional Greenspace it will provide along The Crusher's east lot line.

Chairman Stout stated that Option 2 appears to be the most favorable course of action for the applicant to pursue. She asked the Committee members if the applicant should proceed with Option 2 and the Committee members unanimously agreed.

5. Unfinished Business

None.

6. New Business

None.

7. Reports from Staff

Mr. Said stated that Linda Ericksen, the Committee's administrative secretary, is retiring at the end of January.

Mr. Said also stated that City staff conducted a public input meeting the night of January 7th at City Hall regarding the City's EPA environmental assessment grant proposal. Staff was pleased by the attendance and participation of the public at the meeting. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for January 14th to address any public comments received. The grant must be submitted to the EPA by January 22nd.

8. Adjournment

Alderman Banas made a motion, seconded by Alderman John Smith, to adjourn the January 13, 2014 Development Committee meeting at 7:41 p.m. The Committee members unanimously agreed and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Harris
City Planner