

CITY OF WEST CHICAGO

WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET

MINUTES

Development Committee

February 13, 2012

APPROVED WITH CHANGES AT THE MARCH 12, 2012 MEETING

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

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

Roll call found Aldermen James Beifuss, Nicholas Dzierzanowski, H. Ronald Monroe, Ruben Pineda, John C. Smith, Jr. and Rebecca Stout present.

Alderman Sandy Dimas arrived at 7:05 p.m.

Also in attendance were City Administrator Michael Guttman and Interim Community Development Director Robert Hupp.

2. Approval of Minutes

A. Development Committee of January 9, 2012

Alderman Stout made a motion, seconded by Alderman Monroe, to approve the January 9, 2012 Development Committee Minutes as presented. The members unanimously agreed. Alderman Dzierzanowski abstained. Motion carried.

3. Public Participation – None.

4. Items for Consent

Chairman Pineda read the Consent Items:

- A. Oliver Hoffmann Corporation – Proposed Fourth Amendment to an Annexation Agreement
- B. St. Andrew Lutheran Church - 155 N. Prince Crossing Road, Sign Variance
- C. Authorize the City Administrator to Enter into a Professional Services Agreement with Robert A. Hupp
- D. Authorize the Seizing of Roquette Properties' Letter of Credit in the Event That Its Project Is Not Ready for Final Close-out Prior to the Expiration Date of March 7, 2012.

Alderman Monroe stated that he wanted to discuss Item 4B.

Alderman Stout made a motion, seconded by Alderman Smith, to move Consent Items 4A, 4C and 4D to the February 20, 2012 City Council meeting. Voting yea: Aldermen Stout, Smith, Beifuss, Dzierzanowski, Monroe and Pineda. Voting nay: 0. Motion carried.

5. Items for Discussion

4B. St. Andrew Lutheran Church – 155 N. Prince Crossing Road, Sign Variance

Chairman Pineda requested staff to provide a brief overview. Mr. Hupp stated that the church has an existing changeable copy sign of 24 square feet, which is double-sided. He added that the church would like to remove it and replace it with a new LED 24 square foot changeable copy sign. He noted that the existing sign does not comply with the current ordinance. He commented that in 2008 the City adopted an ordinance limiting the LED portion of a sign to 30% of the total sign area. Mr. Hupp stated that the proposed signage area is 24 square feet, which would allow for approximately 7.2 square feet of LED signage. He noted that the church is proposing to increase the LED portion of the sign to 15 square feet. He noted further that the church could comply with the ordinance by constructing a 50 square foot sign. He commented that staff and the Plan Commission did not feel that was the best solution and that it would be appropriate to grant a variance.

Alderman Monroe stated that the 30% was set for a reason to keep these signs from being too bright. He added that he could understand a slight variance but this is more than double what is allowed. He noted that he is not in favor of LED signs especially with residents in the area.

Alderman Beifuss commented that the Plan Commission looked at it and thought it was within the spirit of the ordinance, which was to limit the extent of LED signs. He noted that a 3 x 5 sign is about in line with the Reed-Keppler Park sign on the corner. He noted further that the church could build a bigger sign to comply.

Alderman Monroe commented that he thought the sign at Reed-Keppler Park is turned off at night. He added that this sign would be on a major thoroughfare and he thinks the church would want to keep it on all the time so their message is seen. He stated that he is concerned with the brightness of the sign.

Alderman Stout asked if the LED would be multi-colored or red. Mr. Hupp responded that in a residential district it would be limited to one color. Alderman Stout commented that she does not think the brightness would be an issue because this is not a multi-colored, really busy sign. Mr. Hupp stated that the ordinance does limit the brightness of the sign.

Alderman Dimas asked what the square footage is of the Reed-Keppler Park sign. Mr. Hupp responded that he was not sure. He added that they have a very similar variance. Alderman Beifuss commented that he thought the LED portion of the Reed-Keppler sign is a little bigger.

Chairman Pineda stated that the City spent a lot of time on these signs. He noted that there were reasons for the limitations and a lot of thought was put into it. He commented that right out of the box someone is requesting to double the size of the LED. He added that if the variance was granted, it would be setting a precedent. He added further that if the Plan Commission looked at each sign case by case, the City could run into issues. Chairman Pineda commented that this request is not due to a hardship. He added that there is a stoplight at the corner so people will be stopped to read the sign and traffic does not travel at 55 m.p.h. in that area. He commented that to make changes at this point defeats the purpose of the ordinance. He noted that they could construct a larger sign and comply with the existing ordinance. He added that right now this is not a good precedent to set because someone else will want it and if we start going case by case people will say that the City is not being fair. He added further that we need to be consistent.

Alderman Dimas stated that her concern is that if we do not allow the variance, then they are going to build the larger sign. She noted that then it becomes which is the bigger eyesore, the larger sign or the larger space with LED. She noted further that she is having a hard time deciding this issue especially because the sign is on a corner and major thoroughfare into the City.

Alderman Dzierzanowski noted that the existing sign is legal non-conforming. He asked if the City allows changeable signs anymore. Mr. Hupp responded yes, it is the same language as the LED sign. He added that changeable copy is either the letters that you insert or the LED sign. He added further that if it was built today, only 30% of the box could be changeable and the rest would have to be permanent. Alderman Dzierzanowski noted that the sign is 24 square feet now that they can change and they are making the size smaller to 15 square feet of changeable letters.

Alderman Smith questioned if we are setting a percentage precedent. He commented that this variance would allow the lighted portion of a smaller square to be bigger. He added that the next person creates the big sign and wants the same percentage of lighted letters as in this smaller one. He commented that if we are setting a percentage precedent imagine what the next sign would look like. He added that he would like to avoid setting that precedent.

Alderman Beifuss stated that he agrees with the issues of setting precedent and the percentage. He added that the ordinance may need to be amended in the same way the driveway ordinance had unintended consequences due to the language so it was amended. He commented that an amendment could include a reasonable minimum size that is changeable, perhaps 3 x 5, and beyond that we would look at the percentage of the sign. He added that for a very large sign the changeable copy could be limited to 30%. He

added ~~may be~~ *maybe* that would be a way to fix the problem where someone ~~does not~~ wants *a changeable portion but does not want* a very large sign ~~but they want some~~ *changeable* due to line of sight issues, building size or it is more aesthetically pleasing.

Alderman Smith commented that the ordinance does not consider all eventualities and because of it, it has left the door open to cause a precedent. He added that there is not enough verbiage to disallow it and there is no foundation to make a decision without creating a precedent.

Chairman Pineda stated that he is not comfortable with the variance. He added that it is against what the City is trying to accomplish. He noted that they could make the larger sign and get the square footage for the LED portion that they want but at least the City is sticking to what it decided. He noted further that the ordinance could be changed in the future. He commented that he would also like to limit when the sign could be lit because it is across from residential property. Chairman Pineda stated that he is not sure if the Committee wants to move forward with this variance request or what the timeline is for the church.

Mr. Mike Riebe responded that the start date for the sign depends on the variance. He added that he spoke to several of the neighbors regarding the lighting and at the meeting last Tuesday, the neighbor right across from the church did not have a problem with it. He added further that the church has been a good neighbor for 50 years and if there was a problem with the lights, they would turn them off at night. He commented that he did not think it was a precedent because the Park District asked for a variance after the ordinance was in place so that would have been the precedent.

Chairman Pineda stated that that was his point, first the Park District requested it and now the church is requesting a variance. Mr. Riebe commented that twice in four years is not a lot. Chairman Pineda commented that the LED signs are becoming very popular. He noted that the Committee was not in favor of LED signs for billboards.

Alderman Dimas asked how long it would take to review the ordinance and possibly make the changes. Mr. Hupp responded that it would take staff two to three weeks to review and then it would go through a public hearing before the Plan Commission. He added that it could be back before this Committee in the summer.

Alderman Smith noted that the problems with the current ordinance have been identified. He added that we could accommodate the church in the future and satisfy the precedent concerns. He added further that he would like the revisions to be expedited as much as we can.

Mr. Hupp stated that if the general consensus is that the sign is okay except that the ordinance does not allow it, the best course is to go back and rethink the ordinance.

The Committee members agreed that the ordinance should be revisited. Chairman Pineda stated that it should be expedited and brought back next month for discussion.

Alderman Dimas made a motion, seconded by Alderman Smith, to table the sign variance for St. Andrew Lutheran Church to the March 12, 2013 Development Committee meeting. Voting yea: Aldermen Dimas, Smith, Beifuss, Dzierzanowski, Monroe, Pineda and Stout. Voting nay: 0. Motion carried.

5A. Streaming Committee Meetings Via the Internet

Chairman Pineda noted that Alderman Dzierzanowski had this item at his committee level.

Alderman Dzierzanowski stated that there were six members present at the last Infrastructure Committee meeting where it was discussed and everyone seemed to be in favor of it. He commented that Alderman Smith had to leave the meeting early. He added that there is money in the budget for it. He added further that it is a matter of purchasing two cameras, microphones and sending it through the internet to be catalogued on our website for anyone to pull it up to view any of the committee meetings. He commented that in his opinion it is a far more advanced step than what is currently being done. Alderman Dzierzanowski stated that in the future if people could not attend the meetings and wanted to find out what occurred they could view it. He noted that the meeting would not be live. He noted further that the Infrastructure Committee put off the official vote until all seven members could be present.

Alderman Smith commented that he agreed with his fellow members on the Infrastructure Committee.

Chairman Pineda stated that he has been here 14 years and he always thought the Committee meetings should be televised because this is where the discussion takes place. He added that he is all for it. He asked if the members were in favor of it.

The members agreed.

Mr. Guttman stated that he wanted to clarify that it would not be on the City's server but on the software company's server. He noted that the next question to consider is if the Committee wants to meet in a Committee Room or Council Chambers and that can be worked out down the road.

6. **Unfinished Business – None.**
7. **New Business – None.**
8. **Reports from Staff**

*Mr. Hupp provided a brief update regarding the West Washington Street Redevelopment Project. He noted that the City has commenced work with the consultant to reconfigure the site plan to remove the police station. He added that the City has received the Phase I Environmental Report, which looked at the history of all the properties. He added further that it came back with questions as far as environmental issues on all but two of the properties. Mr. Hupp commented that they asked for a proposal from the consultant for Phase II, which is when borings are done and find out if, in fact, anything is there. He added that he expects to have at least a sketch of the site plan at the next meeting. He added further that there may possibly be two or three options in terms of general arrangement of things because they have been talking about parking for City Hall, the Recreation Center and the nearby retail. He commented that if there is a parking deck, they are trying to locate it so it serves all of the uses.

Chairman Pineda noted that \$380,000 has been budgeted for the Phase II Environmental Study but we do not know the cost yet. Mr. Hupp responded that the City has applied for a grant.

Alderman Beifuss asked what the timing of the grant is. Mr. Hupp responded that the City is supposed to get a decision in June or July. He noted that the funding would not be until October. He noted further that the grant is \$200,000 for Phase II and \$200,000 for remediation.

Chairman Pineda commented that if there is a Brownfield, there is money for that too.

*Mr. Hupp stated that only two proposals were received for 151 W. Washington Street. He added that the deadline has been extended to the end of February. He added further that after the deadline, there was interest from a St. Charles developer, who has experience and might be someone worth considering.

9. Adjournment

Alderman Stout made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Smith. The members unanimously agreed. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Ericksen