

# CITY OF WEST CHICAGO

WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET

Approved on September 14, 2015

## MINUTES

### DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

August 10, 2015, 7:00 P.M.

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

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

Roll call found Aldermen John Banas, James Beifuss, Melissa Birch, Laura Grodoski, Jayme Sheahan, John Smith and Becky Stout, present.

Also in attendance was Director of Community Development, John Said.

2. **Approval of Minutes.**

A. **July 13, 2015**

Alderman Beifuss made a motion to approve the minutes with changes, which was seconded by Alderman Grodoski. All remaining members agreed, with only Melissa Birch abstaining, and the motion carried.

3. **Public Participation.**

None.

4. **Items for Consent.**

A. **Casa Rios Bridal Boutique – 204 Main Street, Façade Grant**

B. **F. Perez & Associates – 178 W. Washington Street, Façade Grant**

Alderman Beifuss motioned first to approve the items for consent, which was seconded by Alderman Birch. All remaining members agreed and the motion carried.

## **5. Items for Discussion.**

### **A. Bowling Green Sports Center – 243 W. Roosevelt Road, Appearance Code Appeal.**

John Said reviewed the key elements of this item and stated that at the July 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, the applicant and City were asked to check with other sources independently in order to obtain more information on the possible stripping of the existing primer-filled coat that was already applied to the brick portion of the building. City staff contacted other sources to inquire about the paint-stripping process, while the applicant did not provide any information on this matter. City staff identified three possible options for the Committee to consider, which Mr. Said reviewed for the members.

Alderman Smith suggested that the discussion be continued in order to obtain the information requested from the applicant. Aldermen Banas, Birch and Beifuss agreed. Alderman Beifuss stated that more information is required if the members are to consider changing the ordinance regarding the Appearance Code. He also identified one instance in the City where painted brick was grandfathered in and then shared some information regarding another possible option for modifying brick color of staining. John Said remarked that staining might no longer be an option for the applicant and Alderman Beifuss suggested that staining be considered for any possible changes to the Appearance Code. Alderman Banas agreed that further research on this would be warranted.

Mr. Brandon Smith, a representative from Bowling Green, spoke next about his attempts to research the matter as requested by the Committee. He mentioned that he attempted to obtain quotes from two companies about stripping the primer and both were not interested in doing the work. Mr. Said stated that this information was not supplied to City staff. Mr. Smith asked for clarification from the members as to exactly what information the members were looking for him to provide.

Alderman Smith remarked that the applicant was asked to gather information that might bolster their position, but that without it, it would be difficult to proceed. Alderman Beifuss mentioned that the applicant had supplied information regarding the newly installed landscaping, which could be damaged if chemicals were used in paint stripping.

Mr. Scott Smith, General Manager of Bowling Green, asked the Committee to more precisely outline the information sought. John Said clarified that the applicant and City staff were asked to research sources independently so that the information could be reviewed prior to the next meeting. Mr. Smith replied that his online research shows there are numerous options and opinions regarding this process and they are willing to do what the Committee decides. Alderman Grodoski added that any additional information regarding their case would have been helpful. Alderman Beifuss stated his desire to know about the extent of the damage involved in stripping paint from brick vis-à-vis the method employed to do so and the result. Alderman Banas agreed and asked to be informed about the odds of these techniques damaging the brick surface. Mr. Brandon

Smith added that based on his 10 years of experience in the painting industry, there is a consensus among painters that stripping paints and stains never results in their complete removal and that it is very time consuming. He was also dubious that the removal would look good. Alderman Banas asked the applicant for something solid in writing and Alderman Birch also stressed the need for outside opinions in writing.

Alderman Stout stated that while the Committee wants to work with the applicant to solve this immediate problem, at the same time, the Committee needs to be able to justify any change to the Appearance Code with fact and not opinion. Alderman Banas added that evidence is further needed to convince City Council.

Alderman Banas made a motion to table the discussion to next month's meeting with the stipulation that the applicant provide information from outside sources, as originally requested in July, to discuss stripping the primer-filler coat.

### **B. Strategic Planning – Commercial and Industrial Properties**

John Said explained that with the recently announced closings of local businesses General Mills, Hobby Lobby and Fox Valley Volkswagen, he was asked to draft a strategic plan of transition for the City and the community. He invited the Committee members to express their thoughts and opinions about this.

Alderman Banas asked about the responsibility to the newly unemployed and John Said commented that he had already been in touch with local manufacturers, many of whom expressed that currently, there is demand for experienced workers. Alderman Banas suggested there be a coordinated effort to provide information on the City website about employment opportunities and websites to job seekers.

A discussion began among the members about the General Mills facility and its time frame for closing, potential uses for other manufacturers or conversion to non-residential lofts or offices, value, and zoning. Alderman Banas offered that the City advertise their willingness to work with a buyer. John Said shared an example of a food-growing facility as a possibility. Alderman Banas suggested a multimedia brochure to advertise the communities' features and to attract new businesses and Alderman Grodoski submitted that the facility might be a good fit for some small-sized manufacturers.

Alderman Smith asked about the potential for noxious manufacturing in this area. John Said replied that industrial performance standards in the code protect against this and Alderman Beifuss stated that code enforcement might not be sufficient in all circumstances. Alderman Banas suggested that the property be advertised for sale in trade magazines and that the benefits of investing in West Chicago should be highlighted. Alderman Stout asked for the Committee's thoughts on the locations of the other two businesses closing. John Said mentioned that he is already working closely with a real estate agent who has reached out to many different business sectors. Alderman Beifuss inquired about the TIF offerings for the Hobby Lobby location.

A discussion followed between John Said and Aldermen Stout and Banas about the City's current prohibition of used car sales as stand-alone businesses, the possibility of larger dealerships of used cars, such as CarMax, exclusive or exotic car repair and motorcycle dealerships. Alderman Stout said that marketing to dealerships of smaller vehicles may be a good idea.

Alderman Banas further stressed advertising both the City's willingness to consider development options and the many advantages to doing business here. Alderman Beifuss stated that while it's important to be flexible, it's also important to have controls in place to monitor manufacturing in the General Mills site. He also voiced his preference for maintaining new car sales due to their sales tax base and he further suggested the idea of dividing up larger retail spaces, such as the Hobby Lobby store, into smaller ones. Alderman Banas offered the idea of signage to better promote the segmentation into smaller businesses. John Said submitted that population density in that area adds a challenging factor for marketing it.

John Said expressed his appreciation to the Committee members for their comments and ideas.

**6. Unfinished Business.**

None.

**7. New Business.**

None.

**8. Reports from Staff.**

None.

**9. Adjournment.**

**Alderman Banas made a motion, seconded by Alderman Smith, to adjourn the Development Committee meeting at 8:10 p.m. The Committee members unanimously agreed and the motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Burke  
Executive Secretary