

CITY OF WEST CHICAGO

WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET

Approved May 13, 2019

MINUTES

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

April 8, 2019, 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 James Beifuss, Melissa Birch Ferguson, Michael Ferguson, Bonnie Gagliardi, Matt Garling, Jayme Sheahan and Rebecca Stout present.

Also in attendance was Community Development Director, Tom Dabareiner and Economic Development Coordinator, Pete Kelly.

2. **Approval of Minutes.**

A. **March 11, 2019.**

Alderman Beifuss moved and Alderman Ferguson seconded a motion to approve the minutes. Voting Aye: Aldermen Beifuss, Birch Ferguson, Ferguson, Gagliardi, Sheahan and Stout. Voting to Abstain: Alderman Garling. Voting Nay: 0.

3. **Public Participation.** None.

4. **Items for Consent.**

A. **Plat of Consolidation, 125 Wood Street.**

B. **First Amendment to the Water Treatment Plant PUD, 1400 W. Hawthorne.**

C. **Special Uses and Plat of Consolidation, 1817 Blackhawk.**

D. **Special Uses and Variances, 1850 West Roosevelt.**

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E. Variance Requests, 555 Innovation Drive (DuPage Business Park).

Alderman Beifuss requested Item 4.E. be pulled from the consent agenda for a staff update.

Alderman Gagliardi moved and Alderman Garling seconded a motion to approve Items A, B, C, and D. Voting Aye: Aldermen Beifuss, Birch Ferguson, Ferguson, Gagliardi, Garling, Sheahan and Stout. Voting Nay: 0.

Discussion of Item 4.E. followed whereby Alderman Beifuss asked for clarification about the variance from the berm and landscape requirements and whether it is because the proposed building would sit below the grade of the road. Mr. Dabareiner explained that loading docks should not be visible from the street. However, because of the way the building location is oriented, it would have been impossible to block a view of them without building a berm and adding landscaping. After a lot of back and forth, and at the request of staff, the applicant submitted plans to include a taller berm and some additional trees. They provided site cross sections to illustrate the reduced lines of sight from along Roosevelt Road and Innovation Drive. Staff also asked for a wall around the mechanicals as the parapet is unable to hide the rooftop mechanicals. Mr. Dabareiner noted they have been very cooperative in providing the changes staff has asked for and have ultimately delivered a better looking product than what would have been. Alderman Beifuss asked about the screening challenges due to the grade change on Roosevelt Road, and Mr. Dabareiner replied that the way it goes uphill is a hardship not under the applicant's control, and this is why the variance is needed.

Alderman Birch Ferguson moved and Alderman Sheahan seconded a motion to approve Item E. Voting Aye: Aldermen Beifuss, Birch Ferguson, Ferguson, Gagliardi, Garling, Sheahan and Stout. Voting Nay: 0.

5. Items for Discussion.

A. RFP for Central-Main Street Redevelopment Area. 5-46

Tom Dabareiner updated the members on this item. Kane McKenna has worked on TIF projects for the City in the past, and they were contracted to draft the RFP for the Central-Main Street Redevelopment Plan. He then introduced Pete Kelly, the City's Economic Development Coordinator, who was present to answer questions. He stated that staff is looking for the member's input at this time.

Pete Kelly stated this particular RFP has been a long time coming, pursuant to the Central Main Street Redevelopment Plan approved back in May of 2018. It solicits proposals from both the development and investment communities and focuses primarily on the 8 City-owned acres, but it does not preclude development on other privately-owned parcels outside of that. He referenced the Plan and the way in which it is broken out into 5 blocks which begin with Block 1 on Washington and Main Streets and then moves southeast all

the way to City Hall's current location on Block 5. The RFP provides for either a master plan development on a large scale and/or incremental development projects. It provides for detailed guidance with respect to the City's expectations for quality and types of projects. He offered to answer any questions the members might have.

Alderman Garling asked about the timeline, and Mr. Kelly responded that he will put forth the RFP as soon as the Development Committee, City Council and the City Administrator say yes. The timeline will remain roughly the same in that the period between tasks will remain the same. He added that he has specific developers that he will target personally, but he will also email/mail it to other developers as well.

Alderman Garling asked where the Committee's specific requirements for green space and building height guidelines near surrounding residences could be found in the RFP. Mr. Kelly responded that it is up to the developer to refer to the Plan for this information. Mr. Garling stated that these two items were approved by City Council and were to be included in the RFP. Mr. Kelly remarked that as to where and what types of park or green space amenities, it is easier to decide once the building infrastructure is determined. Alderman Garling acknowledged that point, and he stated this is why the items were not added to the Plan but to the RFP instead. Therefore, it does not meet what the City Council approved.

Alderman Gagliardi recalled that same City Council meeting discussion and pointed out that the members also discussed the need to get the proposal out there and have developers respond, as it is better to have something rather than nothing. When the developers do finally come to the table with their proposals, the members can tell them what they like and what they don't like, such as additional green space is wanted or that building is too high. She stated that while she understands Alderman Garling's concerns, she also remembers the importance of getting the RFP out there.

Pete Kelly stated that Section VI of the Draft RFP, City Development Objectives & Requirements, specifically addresses "Quality Open Space," so that developers are being told expressly to work quality open space into their proposals without specifying where. This is one of the aspects they plan to evaluate the proposal on.

Alderman Birch Ferguson stated she agrees with Alderman Gagliardi that they need to get this out there. This the beginning process and because this is an RFP they will be able to negotiate whatever comes their way. She then read the last paragraph of Section IX of the Draft RFP whereby it is stated the City reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, to negotiate terms, etc. She said they have all of the power with regards to this RFP, and they can reject all of the proposals they receive and send out another RFP if they need to. She deals with RFPs a lot in her job, and it seems pretty standard to her. She is looking forward to getting this out there.

Alderman Beifuss recalled that there was significant discussion last May to include specific provisions about maximizing green space in their recommendation for the resolution. There was a consensus at the Council meeting, and it has to be part of what they are doing here. He recognized that they are going to receive proposals that will vary, but if the City specifies what it wants up front, then the developers will know what it is that they are supposed to be doing and they won't waste their time. They should not put out a blank slate, and then later criticize it for not being right. While you cannot dictate all details, it is imperative they state up front they wish to maximize green space. Requesting quality open space is not the same thing as asking to maximize green space. This project will add a lot of density, and because of the CMAP study, they know that West Chicago has higher density households than surrounding communities. Because of that reality, they should expect the density per unit of the proposed housing would be higher as well, and amenities for these people need to be provided. In this particular neighborhood there is currently no tot lot or park and in the example provided by Farr Associates, the tot lot they propose is also designed to be a drainage swale, which, he concluded, is not as functional and is also insufficient, given the expected density. This is why adding in the language to maximize green space as much as possible, is a better way to phrase it. They are not interested in just adding density; they want something better.

Alderman Gagliardi asked if the City can install a park or green space. Mr. Dabareiner replied that he had envisioned that the parks or green spaces would be managed and operated by the apartment complexes. Alderman Gagliardi indicated that she works for a national home builder and based on the studies done, green space and walking paths are known to be very desirable for buyers. She stated that a lot of developers already know this, and she said she thinks the members will be surprised by what they offer. It is not going to be barracks with a striped parking lot. Developers spend a lot of time doing their research.

Alderman Garling stated that the timeline dates need to be changed anyway, so he suggested adding language to Section VI to reflect they want to maximize green space and to consider the visual impact of surrounding residents.

Mr. Dabareiner pointed out that the visual impact for residents was already included in the "Assimilation with Surrounding Area" paragraph. He indicated he would like to retain "Quality Open Space," but working in a phrase to "maximize green space where possible" would not be a problem. He cautioned that over emphasizing green space, however, might result in taller buildings that take up less of a footprint as developers look to hit a certain number of units. Pete Kelly added that institutional investors will not look at anything smaller than 200 units. Alderman Beifuss asked if the 200 units is per block, and Mr. Kelly replied that it is 200 units per development, which could be spread across more than one block. Alderman Beifuss stated that is new information for him, and what it suggests is that you need not go as high to make your money and you can have more green space. Mr. Kelly stated that, based on some conceptual plans shared with him by developers already, their intent is to use some of City property as surface parking for

tenants. If not surface parking, then a parking deck would be needed, but it is costlier to build. Extra construction costs make it harder for them to hit their return on investment, and more units would need to be added. The firm that did the economic analysis for the Plan, Zimmerman Volk, said that the City could sustain 380 to 540 units over a five-year period. Alderman Beifuss stated that the economic analysis done for the Plan was valuable, but he was not impressed with the overall Plan design or the stormwater management solutions.

Alderman Beifuss went on to state that this area of the downtown is his neighborhood and he has lived there since 1993. How this development plays out is of particular interest to a lot of people he has talked to. They want to see good quality development that does not diminish the quality of life. They want it to be a better downtown. The City spent 10 years acquiring property, and now that they have it, people are going to be watching to see what happens, and it is very important that they get it right. Pete Kelly stated the City has several tools at their disposal to control the development. As an example, he stated that some of the developers he has met with have stated a willingness to hold public design charrettes.

Alderman Stout surmised from the members that if verbiage is added about maximizing green space, they can move forward with the RFP. She stressed they want to get this out there so they can begin getting responses. Once they have responses, that is when they can take the time to get it right. There was consensus among the members.

Alderman Beifuss asked Mr. Kelly about the process for the timeline as it seemed rather aggressive to him to request submission of proposals so early. Mr. Kelly replied that the timeline came from Kane McKenna, who indicated it is adequate. He added that, given his experience on the development side, five weeks is sufficient time to pull the information together. Most proposals are boilerplates, and the rest can be put together by architects and engineers in that time frame. Alderman Beifuss pointed out they had asked Farr Associates about the income level for the tenants, but they were never given a reasonable answer. He noted this is something very important from the standpoint of the City and especially the schools, but also in terms of bringing up the quality of the commercial in the downtown. This is an important element of this process, for, if the new tenants do not have enough disposable income, then the restaurants and other commercial they want will suffer. He is very interested in having this information, as this will tell him whether they can meet their goal. Otherwise, there would be no purpose to this exercise of adding density; it would just result in more problems.

Alderman Gagliardi recalled the price for the proposed townhomes to be from the upper \$200s to the mid \$300s. She stated she deals with buyers all day long and they are going to have buyers who are stretching their incomes to the max and those who want something different like a downtown vibe close to public transit who do have disposable income. You cannot pinpoint income levels. All buyers/tenants, however, are going to have to qualify financially anyway.

Pete Kelly stated the demand is for high-end, heavily amenitized apartments. West Chicago already has an adequate supply of Class B and C apartments. In preliminary meetings with developers, they are proposing apartments with high-end finishes with a lot of amenities at about \$2.00 per square foot. This is the demand coming from millennials and empty nesters, and this is what they are building in many communities in the Western Suburbs.

Alderman Birch Ferguson stated that she really appreciates the discussions they are having tonight, and she thinks that this is a great group of people to tackle the RFP process going forward. A lot of what they are talking about tonight, however, is more suited for when they have actual proposals to look at. She asked if a vote was needed for this, and Mr. Dabareiner said that it is merely direction to staff. Alderman Birch Ferguson then indicated that she is ready to move forward with it.

Alderman Garling asked for clarification on changing the dates in the timeline, and Mr. Dabareiner replied he is not ready to do so just yet as staff will need the approval of the City Administrator. But in terms of the relationship of those dates, that will not change as that is what Kane McKenna has advised them to do. Alderman Stout concluded that staff has been given enough information from the members to move forward.

6. Unfinished Business. None.

7. New Business.

Alderman Beifuss asked staff for an update on inspecting for light pollution problems around the City. He mentioned this has to do with when a business retrofits their lights with LED's. Staff was going to work with code enforcement inspectors to schedule regular inspections. Mr. Dabareiner said they are inspecting in the evenings once a month, although it is harder in the summer with more hours of daylight to measure nighttime lighting. He noted that it all comes down to companies that switch to LEDs as they try to save money. So far, they have received a lot of cooperation from businesses. Alderman Beifuss asked Mr. Dabareiner if he recalled any specific examples. Mr. Dabareiner could not recall the name of the business, but he believes it was one of the fast food restaurants.

8. Reports from Staff.

Tom Dabareiner reported that U-Haul has decided to walk away from the North Avenue location. They wanted more storage units than what the City could offer.

9. Adjournment.

Alderman Birch Ferguson moved and Alderman Sheahan seconded the motion to adjourn the Development Committee meeting at 7:48 P.M. The Committee members unanimously agreed and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Burke