DRAFT MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION
VILLAGE HALL- COUNCIL CHAMBER
July 9, 2015
7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair David Mann; Commissioners Mark Benson, Jeremy Burton, Garret Eakin, Mark Gartland, Douglas Gilbert, JoBeth Halpin, Greg Marsey, and Monica Sanders

EXCUSED: None

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Failor, Village Planner; Michael Marrs, Attorney;
Andy Stein, Clark Street Developments; Ryan McBride and Jonathan Kubow, Lennar Multifamily Communities; Mike De Rouin, FitzGerald Associates Architects; Javier Millan, KLOA; Rick Sinnott of Eriksson Engineering Associates

Roll Call
Chair Mann called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and roll was called. A quorum was present.

Non-Agenda Public Comment
None.

Approval of Minutes
None

Public Hearing(s)
PC 15-02: Planned Development; Oak Park Station (1123-1133 Lake Street / 1133-1145 Westgate / 1100 North Boulevard); The Applicant seeks approval of a two-building, multi-story, mixed use planned development with 271 residential rental units, 26,000 square feet of retail, 428 public parking spaces, a private pedestrian bridge across Westgate and a new public street (Maple Avenue). *CONTINUED FROM JULY 2, 2015.*

Chair Mann asked Commissioners Marsey and Gilbert if they had reviewed the video from the last meeting. Commissioner Marsey agreed; Commissioner Gilbert indicated he had watched half of the meeting.

Chair Mann explained the procedure for the meeting.

Mr. Andy Stein, applicant, explained that they would be presenting some updated elevations in response to comments from last week's meeting. First, Mr. Stein addressed the compensating benefits of the project: a new village-owned public parking garage; a new north-south street for the village; enhanced streetscape along Lake, Maple, Westgate streets and North Boulevard; and that they will take ownership of the 1118 Westgate building, save the façade and build a new building behind the current façade.

Mr. Mike De Rouin presented the elevations in response to comments from the last meeting. He said they would also address comments from the memo by Mr. Floyd Anderson, who consulted with the village on the design aspect of the project. Mr. De Rouin indicated that the first and second floors of the shared garage would be signed as short-term parking so that retail parkers would know where to park. Residents would be informed in their leases that they should park on higher levels in the garage. He said 161 spaces in total on both floors would be signed in such a way.

He gave examples of the garage screen walls done in other projects, such as painted aluminum panels with a photograph overlay. Also a starburst pattern was shown.

He addressed Mr. Anderson's question about how much of the garage was visible on the east and north alley portions- he gave a photo imposed example to show that the garage was not very visible. A proposed change to the east façade would take the garage screen pattern with dissolved panels so the screen texture fades away, with denser screening at top. On the north side, they would use only vertical channels on the top of the south building. He gave a detail of the garage screen saying the texturing would be in different sizes rather than just paint.

He said they removed the brick banding on the south building. Instead they were going with a stucco material, called Sto. Sto would be along the bottom and top of the garage to create a frame. Mr. Anderson questioned how the development related to other buildings along Westgate and Lake Streets. Mr. De Rouin showed a new rendering with the adjacent buildings. He said they were changing the loading dock to a panel dock door. The south building, all masonry on the second through fourth levels would be concrete and they relocated the loading dock to the west to create a building line.

Commissioner Marsey asked about the cladding on the garage, why not screen all the way around. Mr. De Rouin said because from the alley, the side of the garage would be unlikely to be seen. Commissioner Marsey said this was reasonable.

Commissioner Marsey noted that along North Boulevard, as the trains came in it would be a perfect opportunity for welcoming people to Oak Park, had the developers considered some signage in that regard. Mr. Stein agreed, saying there were three possible areas to advertise either businesses or the district or the village. Mr. De Rouin said there was no plan to do a photograph image on the garage, but they were considering a pattern. Commissioner Marsey strongly suggested something recognizable to welcome people to the community by working with the Public Art Advisory Commission (PAAC) as the murals on the abutment have been very successful. Mr. Stein said they have met with PAAC and one of the things discussed was screening on the garage.

Commissioner Marsey indicated he liked the changes and thought the development was better than before. He asked about the revenue sharing with the garage and who would be responsible for the long term maintenance. Mr. Stein said the village would own the garage, the developer would operate and be responsible for the garage; the final details would be articulated in the garage agreement. Commissioner Marsey said given the history of Holley Court garage and the problems that surfaced, he hoped the village would consider any potential problems while negotiating that agreement. Mr. Failor agreed and said the village would also hire an owner's representative to oversee construction of the garage.

Commissioner Gilbert said he had issues with the north elevation of the south building along Westgate. As the village was losing another historic building in the downtown, the compensating benefit for that should be something better or just as good. The current design was not better- as exposed open concrete at the top was unacceptable and there was just a blank brick façade- the design needed something with pizazz. He said the pedestrian bridge lacked design- there was a missed opportunity to have something that could be a gateway to downtown Oak Park, instead of a boring hospital connector-type bridge. He suggested something more design inspirational that clads the bridge. He suggested saving the money from the vertical screening on the alley view and transferring that money to design elements for the bridge.

Chair Mann noted at the last meeting there was discussion that the developer was working with PAAC on lighting installations for the bridge. Mr. Stein said there has been discussion about different lighting for different seasons and highlighting the bridge in nighttime. Commissioner Gilbert said that sounded fine for night but what about daylight and summer time when the days are longer.

Commissioner Marsey agreed, and asked for further direction. Commissioner Gilbert gave some suggestions like adding cladding or creating an arch effect, using glass with a printed screen and colors or images, or incorporating an artistic installation.

Commissioner Eakin said the issue was the composition of the entire project rather than one detail. He said there were a lot of isolating elements and it was important that the materials and elements get worked out in concert.

Chair Mann agreed, saying there needed to be a better connection with the design so that the buildings link together.

Commissioner Gilbert said he took issue with counting 428 public parking spaces as a compensating benefit as the code requires 356 spaces, so in reality only 72 spaces go above and beyond as a benefit and he believes most of those would be used by the tenants of the building.

Commissioner Sanders asked if tenants would be allowed to rent out the parking spots in the garage and how the developer would address that. Mr. Ryan McBride said residents would have a vehicle tag that corresponds to a license plate. He said cars would be tracked at the entrance and exits so they would know if a car belonged to a resident.

Chair Mann moved to public comments. Mr. Failor said no one had registered for cross examination.

Ms. Karen Heller said she thinks it is exciting to see new development in an underutilized space and likes the mix of old and new, high and low. She said she feels the height would be out of scale from Marion Street and asked if the developer would consider adding more floors to the north building and reducing the height of the south building as Lake Street could handle taller buildings. She said size and scale should be taken seriously to preserve the character and she was also worried about shadows.

Mr. Richard McNamara said he was in favor of development at this location and in favor of a great 21st Century development but doesn't feel this is it. He said it could be creating problems rather than solving problems. He hoped for more time than November 2015 to break ground.

Chair Mann asked for any more public comment, as there were none, Chair Mann asked commissioners for questions.

Commissioner Sanders asked about the recommendations of only right turns into the development from east bound traffic. Mr. Javier Millan agreed there would be no left turns. He said currently, traffic turning left into the surface parking lot creates a jam in traffic so the recommendation was right turn into and out of Maple Street. Commissioner Sanders asked about changing the timing of the traffic lights to prevent back-ups into Harlem. Mr. Millan said their projections have indicated the traffic lights will work properly. Mr. Failor said they would monitor it and the village will adjust the timing if needed.

Commissioner Gartland noted that Marion Street has the speed table to slow down vehicles and this would now be pushing traffic down Marion. He suggested changing North Boulevard to two-way traffic between Forest and Marion so that people could access it two ways. Mr. Millan said that would lose parking spaces.

Commissioner Halpin asked why not use North Boulevard as the entrance and exit to the development. Mr. Millan said that was considered but North Boulevard carries quite a bit of traffic for a narrow road and also a lot of pedestrians crossing. He said it wouldn't be appropriate to load it as it would create problems and spill onto Harlem and Marion. Commissioner Halpin said North Boulevard was already a thoroughfare while Marion moved much slower. Mr. De Rouin said North Boulevard being one-way

actually breaks up the traffic, plus there was a lot of bus traffic and queuing of buses with the station right there.

Commissioner Gilbert asked how would cars go south on Harlem from the development. Mr. Millan said drivers would have to use South Boulevard. Commissioner Gilbert said drivers would instead go west on North Boulevard and make an illegal left turn onto Harlem, he noted the village will have to have a plan to deal with that. Commissioner Marsey said he didn't believe there was a good solution for that area as it has been low-rated and the only true solution would be to remove parking along Lake Street and make it a four-lane street, but that wouldn't be a good fit downtown.

Commissioner Burton said one of the biggest compensating benefits would be promoting the transportation hub; he asked if there was anything that could be done to the streetscape along North to help the movement of buses and promote public transportation. Mr. De Rouin said the streetscape along North eliminates planter boxes to have a more natural crossing, and they've reconfigured the crosswalk so it will be better for the bus stop. He said there will be a true pedestrian walkway. Commissioners agreed the crosswalk and walkway would need to be clearly defined to flow the crossing in the right direction and not encourage vehicle drop off in front. Commissioner Sanders suggested putting the crosswalk on South Boulevard and encouraging drop off on South where there is less traffic.

Commissioner Gilbert said the offset intersection in downtown was problematic and asked if they considered purchasing property to keep a straight street. Mr. Stein said there were lengthy discussions and many attempts but it did not work out. Mr. De Rouin said the addition of stop signs on Westgate will help make it safer.

Chair Mann asked about Mr. Anderson's comments regarding materials- noting that the Downtown Master Plan calls for durable materials. He said he was concerned about synthetic stucco 200 feet high as he'd never seen it on a high rise building, only on midrise. Mr. De Rouin said they have started research on that concern and are working closely with Sto representatives. He said the company has tested it and they are comfortable with it as it is weather resistant, while thin with not a lot of weight to it. He said direct information from Sto was available. Chair Mann said he was concerned about maintenance issues and wind loading. Commissioner Eakin said this was a huge building that would be very visible, and he had never seen a high rise in stucco so he was very skeptical that it would look good when it gets put up. He suggested another material like glass and concrete. He said he doesn't see the palate coming together and the design needs more cohesion.

Chair Mann referred to Mr. Anderson's memo regarding the façade of the north building, and the coordination with neighboring facades. Mr. De Rouin said they didn't see a strong bond or line along the street and once tenants are secured they can get into details of the first floor tenant space. Chair Mann said he liked that they were trying to establish a rhythm to the ground floor but he was nervous about letting tenants do whatever they wanted, because tenants can come and go. Mr. Stein said they will have tenant design guidelines so that the design can be in the same palate and fit within the architectural context. Commissioner Marsey asked if there were particular businesses in mind. Mr. Stein said they would be working on leasing in-house and they've also engaged a retail broker; they were not designing the project for anyone in particular but looking to attract the best national retail and restaurants. Commissioner Marsey asked if the venting for restaurants will vent to the roof. Mr. Stein agreed.

Commissioner Gilbert said he had no issues with the north elevation as the scale was good and there was much variety along the street. He suggested the cornice would be better if it went along the east elevation, also.

Chair Mann asked about the garage corner at North Boulevard and Maple Avenue- would there be art or benches. Mr. De Rouin said they were still looking at it. The corners could be future retail or an outdoor space for dining. For now it's flexible, it would have landscape and paving for pedestrians to walk. Chair

Mann suggested they think hard about that space as it was a first impression of Oak Park, to consider the entire composition/ experience as this was a gateway to the village.

Commissioner Halpin asked what was on the first floor of the North Boulevard garage building. Mr. De Rouin said planters would be at the base to provide vehicular and pedestrian screening and also advertising screening; some will be open so that the garage was visible. Commissioner Halpin suggested walking along an open parking garage feels bleak. Mr. De Rouin said the landscaping would provide screening. Commissioner Eakin said nine months out of the year the plantings were dead and it would look bleak.

Commissioner Benson said he'd also echo his previous concerns about screening- as it still looked like a four-story fence. There should be more creativity rather than just a pattern.

Commissioner Marsey referenced a letter from Mr. Frank Heitzman, who recommended using modular brick. Mr. De Rouin agreed. Commissioner Marsey said the memo suggested using limestone instead of cast stone. Mr. De Rouin said they were currently using cast stone. Chair Mann stated in his professional opinion, cast stone is heartier and will last longer.

Chair Mann asked for the applicant's summary and closing statements.

Mr. Stein thanked commissioners for their comments. He said the commission should look to the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Ordinance and the Downtown Master Plan to evaluate the proposal. He believed the development meets and exceeds the standards outlined in those documents.

Mr. De Rouin said the development met many goals of the comprehensive plan: to encourage the growth of transit oriented development; to encourage appropriate housing types and densities; by bringing a variety of retail, residential and parking; by making Maple Street a "complete street"; by diversifying and stabilizing the village tax base; by supporting and promoting green buildings as they would be seeking LEED certification and the building would be energy efficient.

Mr. De Rouin said the development met the standards of the zoning ordinance: it was consistent with the municipal service standards; the comprehensive plan standards; the vicinity standards; and economic development and feasibility standards. The development would support property values and promote business growth by bringing new homes to neighborhood. The development partners have the financial and technical capacity to complete the development.

Mr. De Rouin said this area was the number one goal of the Downtown Master Plan and this project would allow the village to realize that goal: it would bring new and exciting retail to the downtown; generate additional housing opportunities; the new street would reduce traffic congestion; it would bring an additional live-work-play environment to the area; it would create sales tax revenue and real estate taxes; and it would promote transit usage.

Chair Mann asked those cross examining objectors for their closing statements. None were present.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the application with conditions. Commissioner Marsey seconded. Chair Mann opened discussion to commissioner deliberations or conditions.

Chair Mann offered the following conditions: the standard condition that all signage must be reviewed by the Community Design Commission; the lighting, paving and streetscape match the Lake Street streetscape under review by the village. He said the following revised designs should come back to the Plan Commission at a later date: the parking garage screen design; pedestrian bridge design; element connections; cornices on the north building; the North Boulevard and Maple Street corner. He said all venting for restaurants shall go through to the roof and no side walls allowed. Commissioner Burton said

he'd like to see the PAAC continue to be involved in the discussions on metal screening and the pedestrian walkway; the north façade of the south building needs to be integrated better into the overall streetscape of Westgate from a material and design standpoint.

Commissioners discussed whether the applicant should return to the Plan Commission with design changes prior to a vote on the application, or should the commission vote on the application with a recommendation that the Village Board send it back to the commission for further discussion. Mr. Failor reminded commissioners that the entire application should be considered; however, discussion should focus mainly on land use while design concerns could be passed along to the Board. Chair Mann said the next level of design couldn't happen in a week and recommended a vote with conditions to be sent to the Board for further consideration by the Board or Plan Commission. Commissioner Gilbert agreed. Commissioner Benson disagreed, saying he'd like more say in the design now, as the Board could opt not to send it back to the Plan Commission. Chair Mann said design conditions were secondary to land use issues for the Plan Commission.

Commissioner Sanders said the developers' report indicated the lack of surface parking would be a weakness as it would reduce impulse shopping. Mr. Failor said that would be the developers' hurdle; the application was meeting the necessary parking requirements. Commissioner Sanders said the lack of surface lots will have vehicles circling the area. Mr. Failor agreed, but said there would be some surface parking lots reopening near the churches on Lake Street that are currently closed due to the Lake and Forest development.

Commissioner Gartland asked staff about the timing of the development and deadlines that need to be met. Mr. Failor explained that the redevelopment agreement has deadline on the public hearing process- if deadlines get missed the applicant has to go to the Board for an amendment, which they have done twice so far. Mr. Stein said the schedule had been set and agreed to by the village. Mr. Stein addressed the surface lot concern and said it pertained to potential retailers rather than shoppers- they would be more apt to locate in a location where surface parking was available rather than a garage.

A short discussion ensued about pursing a vote or asking for the applicants to return to the Plan Commission with more information. A consensus was reached to vote on the application with conditions. Staff recapped the prior conditions; Attorney Marrs reviewed the standard conditions of a planned development. Commissioner Burton added that a study on the stucco material should be submitted and a review of tenant design guidelines. Commissioner Burton moved to accept the conditions and Commissioner Marsey seconded.

Chair Mann clarified that Commissioner Gilbert could not vote as he had not reviewed the entire prior meeting. A roll call vote was taken:

Halpin – yes
Benson –no
Eakin – no
Gartland – yes
Sanders – yes
Marsey –yes
Burton – yes
Mann – yes

The motion passed 6-2. Chair Mann clarified that the next hearing would be on the two alley vacations and the Findings of Fact.

Other Business
None

Adjournment
Commissioner Eakin moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Angela Schell,
Recording Secretary