

Text Amendment Rush Oak Park H Zoning; Plan Commission Hearing May 4, 2023

Summary of Applicants' Proposal

Re-Balancing the Needs of Our Neighborhood with Those of Rush Oak Park Hospital

Our Goals

- Revise the H zoning applicable to ROPH to be consistent with the:
 - Zoning in the West Suburban H District, by amending Article 6.3 of the Zoning Ordinance to limit the maximum height of buildings to 50 feet near residences. Currently, without any Village Board approval, ROPH is free to build as high as 125 feet along the southwest border (along Monroe between Maple & Wisconsin) and up to 80 feet to the southeast border (on Monroe & Wenonah) of the neighborhood. Consistent limitations should also be placed on setback requirements.
 - Tenets of Envision Oak Park; including that actions should support the maintenance and enhancement of Oak Park's neighborhoods.
 - Objectives of the Zoning Ordinance; which include promoting the orderly development of Oak Park in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan, securing adequate light, air, privacy, and convenient access to property, and protecting the character and maintaining the stability of the Village's residential and non-residential areas.
 - Past practices of the Plan Commission and the Village Board.
- Correct omissions in recent zoning changes.

Applicants and Application Standards

- The applicants are all long-term Oak Park residents and home owners in the neighborhood abutting Rush Oak Park Hospital's campus.
- The applicants are *not* anti-ROPH and, in fact, all have positive connections with ROPH.
- The application meets the standard for approval of an amendment to the zoning ordinance, as noted below and in our presentation.

Recent Actions That Have Upset the Balance Between ROPH and Neighborhood

- At the 3/5/2020 hearing to consider the proposed Wenonah Avenue garage, the PC voted to accept the application for a special use amendment with certain conditions, including the reduction in height of the garage by 10 feet, 8 inches.
- Subsequently, ROPH submitted a proposed ordinance for consideration by the Village Board on 2/1/2021 without the height reduction condition. The PC Chairperson represented that this was not a condition, but merely a recommendation. The ordinance was adopted with no height reduction.

- At the same meeting, the Village Board approved rezoning of multiple residential properties on the west side of Maple Avenue south of Monroe to H zone, which was proposed in order to “square off” the ROPH campus. This was done with no apparent discussion or consideration of the height and setback requirements and with no apparent concern for complying with the objectives and guidelines of Envision Oak Park or the Zoning Ordinance.
- The purchase, demolition, and rezoning of the Maple Avenue properties and the construction of the valet parking lot further exacerbated the loss of balance between the neighborhood and ROPH by extending the ROPH campus within feet of the three-story condo building at 621 S. Maple. Under current zoning, a 125-foot high building could be constructed on the site of the valet parking lot.
- Numerous attempts at dialogue with ROPH in 2021 and 2022 on the issue of height and setback limits failed to reach any meaningful response from ROPH, leading to the filing of our text amendment.

Reasons Our Text Amendment Should Be Approved

- Our proposed amendment is fair as evidenced by staff memos indicating that it was “fair” to seek ROPH’s compliance with a 50-foot standard.
- It would promote a transition space between commercial and residential properties by “stepping down” ROPH’s buildings into the adjacent residential neighborhood.
- It would benefit the public by promoting a holistic approach to development in Oak Park that balances the needs of differently zoned districts that abut each other but does not impair the value of residential or commercial properties.
- It would correct the mistaken conclusion that neighbors were notified of the 2017 proposed height reduction in ROPH zoning but were indifferent to such a change.
- It would correct the error or misunderstanding concerning proximity of hospital zoned property to residentially zoned property, which was cited as a significant factor in determining that the neighborhood around ROPH should be treated differently than that of WSH.
- It would correct the error or omission that failed to consider reasonable height changes when the PC and Village Board considered rezoning multiple properties on the west side of Maple Avenue in 2021.
- It is consistent with ROPH’s 1999 Master Plan (note that ROPH claims not to have a current Master Plan).
- It is consistent with ROPH’s more recent representations that it has no plans to further expand into the neighborhood.
- It is *not* radical or unprecedented as evidenced by the fact that similar conditions were placed on the development of the Medical Office Building at 610 S. Maple.
- It would *not* create additional non-conformities and would require only minimal text changes to the existing H-District section of the Zoning Ordinance.
- It does *not* prevent ROPH from future development. However, it would re-balance the dynamics applicable to future development, giving the neighbors and the Village Board greater input as to what such development may look like and the impact on residents and the Village as a whole.