

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION
VILLAGE HALL- ROOM 201

April 5, 2018

7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair David Mann; Commissioners Glenn Brewer, Lawrence Brozek, Jeremy Burton, Greg Marsey, Paul May, Kristin Nordman (arrived at 7:10 pm) and Iris Sims (arrived at 7:02pm)

EXCUSED: None

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Failor, Village Planner; Gregory Smith, Plan Commission Attorney
Tammie Grossman, Director of Development Customer Services

Roll Call

Chair Mann called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Roll was called. A quorum was present. Chair Mann thanked former Commissioner Halpin for her work on the commission.

Non-Agenda Public Participation

None.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Brewer moved to approve the minutes from March 1, 2018. Commissioner Burton seconded. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

Public Hearing

PC 18-02; Planned Development (Lexington Homes LLC); 932-970 Madison Street

The Applicant seeks approval of a special use - planned development for twenty-one (21) attached single family townhomes within the MS – Madison Street Zoning District with the following allowances: 1.) Roof deck setback: 6 feet required – Zero feet proposed; 2.) Landscape buffer: 7 foot wide landscaped rear buffer required; 3.) Street-side building setback: build-to zone of 3-5 feet required – 15.5 feet proposed; 4.) Building height: 35 feet allowed – 42.5 feet proposed.

PC 18-02: Plat of Subdivision (Lexington Homes LLC); 932-970 Madison Street

The Applicant is requesting approval of a plat of subdivision.

Chair Mann reviewed the procedure for a planned development public hearing. He noted no one has signed up to cross examine the applicants.

Mr. Failor said a memo from the Oak Park Economic Development Corporation came in support of the project. Wight and Company also prepared a memo as the village's architectural review consultant. He noted the village has a redevelopment agreement with the developer as the property is village-owned.

Attorney Smith swore in those planning to speak.

Mr. Lawrence Friedman, the attorney representing Lexington Homes, gave an overview of the project and development team.

Mr. John Agenlian from Lexington Homes gave an overview of the company. He said they were primarily an infill, townhome builder focusing on smaller developments. He gave examples of developments they have built that were similar to the application.

Mr. Steve Rezabek, Pappageorge Haymes, architect for Lexington Homes, reviewed the layouts and the elevations for the development. He reviewed the sample building materials. He said the village was interested in a contemporary, fresh and clean design.

Ms. Sharon Dixon, Dixon Design Studio, landscape architect for Lexington Homes, said they did a tree inventory and found only one tree exists on the site, which will be removed and replaced with three new parkway trees and a cash fee of the appraised value of the existing tree. She reviewed the landscape plan for the development, including the variance on the landscape buffer.

Ms. Emily Hoffman, Cook Engineering Group, gave a brief overview of the engineering needs for the development. She noted compensating benefits of the development:

- it would be a remediation of a former dry cleaner location
- the increase in green space would reduce the impermeability of the current site by 50%
- a donation to the affordable housing development fund
- the developer was working with the Oak Park Area Arts Council on a public art component

Mr. Friedman reviewed how the development met the review standards in the planned development application. He said the development met the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and the Madison Street Corridor Plan as it was a low-intense residential use and would provide an appropriate transition from the residential uses and the commercial uses. He noted a traffic study had been completed that determined the development would not cause any major traffic concerns and had adequate parking. He said the initial sales prices would be in the mid-\$400,000-\$500,000 range before extras and that would generate a positive tax benefit to the Village and other taxing districts.

Mr. Failor reviewed the staff report. He reviewed the allowances requested. He said as the land use was all residential they preferred a greater setback so they did support the increased setback. He said the height allowance was supported as the majority of the development would follow the zoning requirements. He said the need for guest parking drove the request to eliminate the landscape buffer and staff was supportive as the fence would screen cars. Additional landscaping was located between the car parking areas. He said the roof deck setback was supported as there was a solid parapet wall on the rooftop. He said staff felt the development was compatible with the surrounding area and with the Madison Street Corridor Plan as well as the Comprehensive Plan. He said the applicant would be using an energy efficiency program and would meet the standards of LEED certification through a third party certifier.

Mr. Rich Van Zeyl, Wight and Company, the architectural design consultant for the Village, reviewed the memo about the design of the development. He said during discussions on the project they suggested moving to a more contemporary look rather than a traditional look that was first proposed. He said they felt the developer would deliver a quality project. The modern expression was appropriate for the Village and the developer would work with Wight on some open items, like coping on the top, the location of gas meters and the color of the window frame.

Chair Mann moved to commissioner questions.

Commissioner Marsey asked how the design of the development morphed from a more traditional design to a modern one; he noted the direction seemed to come from Wight and Company. Ms. Tammie Grossman, Director of Development Customer Services, said the Village Board saw examples of

Lexington developments during the discussion of the redevelopment agreement; at that time the Board asked for a more original and exciting design that was, “out of the box”. She said staff relayed those comments to Wight and Company when discussions were underway with the applicant. Commissioner Marsey said the development underwent a radical redesign and that was problematic to him as typically the architectural design consultant evaluates the design but doesn’t make significant changes; he was concerned about the precedent this would set. Chair Mann said they should focus on the submitted application. Commissioner Marsey agreed.

Commissioner Marsey asked about the lack of windows on the side elevations. Mr. Rezabek reviewed the room types and where windows would be in each room. Commissioner Marsey said the current design didn’t fit well with the neighborhood and the absence of windows on the side didn’t work aesthetically.

Commissioner Marsey asked Mr. Van Zeyl what was the appeal of the design. Mr. Van Zeyl said the design was a clean and modern design for townhouses.

Commissioner Burton asked about the permeable pavers. Ms. Hoffmann said the pavers would be used if site remediation allowed for it. Commissioner Burton asked about site remediation plans. Mr. Agenlian said there was some contamination on site and per the redevelopment agreement the Village would demolish the buildings and address the environmental conditions. Environmental borings and reports were being done and after that the course of action would be determined. If the contamination was too great, then it would have to be capped; if contamination was not too great then soil removal would occur and permeable pavers would be put in.

Commissioner Burton asked about garbage pickup. Mr. Agenlian said every unit would have a garbage can and recycle can. Commissioner Burton asked if pick up would be on the interior road. Mr. Agenlian agreed. Commissioner Burton asked for confirmation that utility meters would be concealed. Mr. Agenlian agreed to screen as much as possible and to make them as unobtrusive as possible.

Commissioner Brozek asked about the landscaping along Madison and urged more landscaping, especially trees along the street. Ms. Dixon said as there were a lot of utilities along Madison it did limit the ability to plant more trees so they put the trees in the spaces between the buildings. She said the foundation landscape and the allowable trees will soften the façade along Madison. Mr. Agenlian clarified the development would widen the current sidewalk to assist with ADA requirements.

Commissioner Brewer asked about the height variance as it was conditional on a fourth floor roof unit. He asked if all the units were capable of supporting the fourth floor. Mr. Rezabek agreed; he said the fourth floor would be set back about ten feet to allow for a small roof top. Chair Mann suggested the application should be amended to reflect a fourth floor on every unit.

Chair Mann asked about the public art component. Mr. Agenlian said they met with the Arts Council last month and as there wasn’t much room on the site for an art component they were considering cash in lieu or another site for art. He said discussion was still ongoing.

Chair Mann asked for public testimony.

Mr. Marshall Brown said he was in favor of the development as a whole. He said Clinton was blocked off and opening that up would concern neighbors. He said his home is 110 years old and the design does not fit well with the block. He had concerns about the sale price and selling the units with School District 97 potentially eliminating busing.

Chair Mann moved back to commissioner questions.

Commissioner Brewer asked if traffic studies look at seasonal changes. Mr. Javier Milan, KLOA, traffic consultant for the applicant, said traffic studies typically need to meet a certain deadline. He acknowledged that the traffic study was done when school was not in session. He said the counts in the study could be a little higher but he didn't believe they would be significantly different. Commissioner Brewer noted Fenwick was down the street and a lot of students drive; he expected this should be noted in the report. He also noted no pedestrian and vehicle crashes were in the report. He would like to know more on the impacts seasonally. Mr. Milan said all pedestrian vehicle accidents were included if any occurred; he could look at individual incidents in the report and get back to commissioners on if a pedestrian was involved. Commissioner Brewer said he had concerns about pedestrians. Mr. Milan said he could bring more information from past counts back to the commission to show if there were any changes seasonally.

Commissioner May said he was concerned about the perpendicular parking along Clinton, he suggested parallel parking would be more suitable as it would be safer for traffic and could allow for another tree. Ms. Grossman said the spaces were highly coveted overnight spaces and the spaces were diagonal not perpendicular; the village would not want to lose any spaces. Commissioner May suggested constructing the spaces so that they don't overhang the sidewalk. Ms. Grossman said she would consult with village staff. Commissioner May had some aesthetic concerns about roof rooms on end units that face Clinton and Home; he asked that the developer consider a setback on those units or possibly an exemption. Mr. Rezabek clarified it would be a different material. Commissioner May said he thought the red brick units needed more detail or more materials; but he thought the scale and use was appropriate and he was generally supportive of the project.

Chair Mann concurred; he said the modern architectural expression on Madison was appropriate but thought it lacked detail like final windows. He urged darker colored windows as it expressed quality at a higher level. He suggested a setback on end roof units to soften the massing effect. He said the elevations along Home or Clinton could use more fenestration; he suggested larger or more window openings. He asked how the EnergyStar requirements differ from LEED. Mr. Agenlian gave some examples of how successful the insulation and heating requirements have been in other developments.

Commissioner Brozek concurred regarding the enhancement of the facades; he said the modern statement on Madison would give definition to the street. He concurred on the fourth level setback.

Commissioner Marsey asked about open items on the Wight memo, especially the window openings. Mr. Agenlian said they would commit to a dark bronze window. Mr. Agenlian said the air conditioning units would be on the roof and gas meter locations would need to be worked out with the gas company, but they will screen and be as unobtrusive as possible.

Commissioner Sims said the design on Madison was very different from the design on Home and Clinton; she asked commissioners what features could improve the façades on those streets. Chair Mann said details along the windows, for example, or the scale and proportion of the windows to bring more detail to the facade.

Commissioner Burton suggested adding windows to the rooftop option on the corner units to add depth as well.

Chair Mann reviewed the items they were requesting more information from the applicant:

- Enhancing the detail on the façades especially the dark brick area, also, the side elevations on Home and Clinton;
- Clarification on the roof rooms with setbacks desired;

- More information on traffic counts during school time; pedestrian accidents at Home and Madison;
- Parking on Clinton with the inclusion of wheel stops.

Commissioner Burton moved to continue the planned development application hearing to April 19, 2018. Commissioner Sims seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Burton- yes

Sims – yes

Marsey – yes

May –yes

Brewer –yes

Brozek –yes

Nordman –yes

Mann – yes

The motion was approved 8-0.

Commissioner Burton moved to continue the subdivision hearing to April 19, 2018. Commissioner Brozek seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Burton- yes

Brozek – yes

Marsey – yes

May –yes

Brewer – yes

Nordman – yes

Sims – yes

Mann – yes

The motion was approved 8-0.

Chair Mann called for a short break.

The meeting resumed at 9:24 pm.

PC 08-05; Zoning Ordinance text amendment – Community Residences

The Applicant has requested amendments to the Oak Park Zoning Ordinance: 1.) to better define “Community Residence”; 2.) to make community residences a permitted use in all residential zoning districts without a resident count limit; and, 3.) by adding “reasonable accommodations” language.

Approval of Findings of Fact

Mr. Failor gave an overview of the amendment and noted the staff report addressed each topic. He said the definition review looked at the term functional relative to a disability. Staff discussed with the zoning consultants who helped to draft the new zoning code; the consultants said they took the definition from federal agencies. Staff reviewed allowing permitted uses without a resident count limit. He said the municipal code would act as a control for density as it prescribes the number of persons who can dwell within a residential unit based on the size of livable area. He said staff suggested including the term “reasonable accommodations” into the language after the last plan commission meeting as well.

Chair Mann moved to public testimony. Attorney Smith swore in those wanting to testify.

Mr. Dan Lauber said what was proposed was better than what exists, but he said there could be unintended consequences. He reviewed some Illinois communities’ regulations and clustering of community residences. He said the cost of housing would not be a deterrent to this. He said without a

definition of family with a cap on the number of unrelated people you cannot mandate licensing of community residences. He warned against clustering of halfway houses.

A short discussion ensued about adding a definition of family with a cap on the number of unrelated people.

Attorney Smith clarified that the zoning consultant in the staff report was Camiros.

Commissioner Marsey asked Ms. Grossman about clustering. Ms. Grossman said the village has not experienced clustering of community residences and there was not a concern right now. A short discussion ensued about clustering and licensing.

Commissioner Brewer moved to approve the findings of fact. Commissioner Brozek seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Brewer – yes

Brozek – yes

Marsey – abstain (he did not review the last meeting's recording)

May – yes

Burton – yes

Nordman – yes

Sims – no

Mann – yes

The motion was passed 6-1, with 1 abstention.

Other Business

None

Adjournment

Commissioner Burton moved to adjourn. Commissioner Sims seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:53 p.m.

Angela Schell,
Recording Secretary