

CITY OF WEST CHICAGO

WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET

MINUTES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

March 12, 2007 - 7:00 p.m.

Approved with no changes at April 9, 2007 Meeting

1. Call to Order, Roll Call and Establishment of a Quorum. Chairman Kwasman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call found Aldermen James E. Beifuss, Jr., Michael B. Kwasman, H. Ronald Monroe, Alan Murphy, Ruben Pineda and Rebecca Stout present. Alderman Nicholas Dzierzanowski was absent.

Also in attendance were Aldermen Lori J. Chassee, Sandy Dimas and Gregory D. Bunch; City Administrator Michael Guttman; Community Development Director Joanne Kalchbrenner; Cultural Services Director LuAnn Bombard; Marketing and Communications Coordinator Rosemary Mackey; and Administrative Secretary Linda Ericksen.

2. Approval of Minutes.

A. Development Committee of March 12, 2007. Alderman Murphy made a motion, seconded by Alderman Stout, to approve the minutes. Alderman Beifuss noted that on Page 5, second paragraph the \$170,000 should be \$270,000. The members unanimously agreed to approve the minutes as revised, with Alderman Pineda abstaining. Motion carried.

3. Public Participation. None.

4. Items for Consent.

Chairman Kwasman read the following items:

- A. Chicago Pizza - 334 S. Neltner Boulevard, #G, Façade Grant
- B. James Miner - 425 Joliet Street, Variance
- C. City of West Chicago - Text Amendments
- D. Tews Real Estate LLC - 399 Wegner Drive, Plat of Consolidation
- E. A.A. Conte - 1250 W. North Avenue, Extension of Special Use

Alderman Stout made a motion, seconded by Alderman Pineda, to place the Consent Items on the March 19, 2007 City Council Agenda under Consent. Voting Yea: Aldermen Stout, Pineda, Beifuss, Monroe, Murphy and Kwasman. Voting Nay: 0. Motion carried.

5. Items for Discussion.

A. Central Main Street Redevelopment Plan - Public Comments

Chairman Kwasman requested staff to provide a brief overview. Ms. Kalchbrenner stated that the Committee was provided a copy of Phase 2 of the study, which included a more detailed land use plan, storm water management and financial information for the redevelopment area of the study. She noted that the study also included various land use alternatives for key parcels within the study area. She added that at its February 12, 2007, meeting, the Development Committee directed staff to schedule a meeting to obtain public input on the proposed plan. She added further that letters were sent to residents and owners within the study area and surrounding neighborhood inviting them to the meeting.

Mr. Kon Savoy, Principal at Teska Associates, Inc, stated that Mr. Aaron Gruen and Ms. Debra Jeans, Principals at Gruen, Gruen & Associates; were present to answer any questions. He noted that Pavia-Marting, an engineering firm, reviewed the storm water and utilities for the area but were not present this evening. He commented that the first phase of the study reviewed the land uses and real estate market conditions for residential and non-residential uses as well as existing physical conditions and zoning regulations. He added that there was an earlier meeting with the Committee where goals were shared. He noted that Phase 2 is a plan with economics.

Cynthia Ontiveros, 27W773 Elm Drive, questioned how the Hispanic element that is currently downtown would be integrated, what the time frame was and how the redevelopment would be paid for. Mr. Savoy responded that the plan contemplates integrating the Hispanic community. He noted that a restaurant cluster is proposed. He noted further that the area lacks a specialty restaurant and a restaurant with a Latino flair would be ideal. He commented that Joliet developed a grass root art community in its downtown and the same could be done in West Chicago. Mr. Savoy responded that there is no specific time frame. He added that the High Street area is likely to be first.

A few members of the audience commented that they would like to see the whole presentation before providing input. Chairman Kwasman stated that the consultants should go ahead with a presentation and then the Committee would hear public input.

Mr. Savoy commented that the Phase 2 Summary Report for the Central Main Street Redevelopment Plan is a guideline for the City to use over time. He added that Phase 3 includes obtaining public input and reactions to the vision being presented. He added further that there would be a meeting scheduled in April for additional input. He noted that the redevelopment plan has been a collaborative effort between the consultants, staff, community and developers. He noted further that Phase 4 would be a final product with an action plan and Phase 5 would take the project out to the market.

Mr. Savoy made a presentation regarding the conceptual redevelopment site plan, parking, linkages, parking, infrastructure capacity, storm water management, market conditions and uses. He showed images of row-houses. He commented that the plan envisioned a unique niche restaurant and mixed uses to bring vitality. He noted that there were many opportunities for the community as far as green space, including gardens, benches, sculptures, shelters, wide parkways with landscaping and a tot lot.

Mr. Savoy reviewed the six development sites. Site 1 includes rowhouses, commercial and parking. Site 2 includes rowhouses and possibly a parking structure. Site 3 includes rowhouses, a mixed use building, retail, restaurant and parking structure. Site 4 includes condos and parking structure. Site 5 includes rowhouses, and detention, keeping the trees, path and historic home. Site 6 includes the restaurant cluster. He added that the mixed use buildings would be three stories and set back. He added further that the restaurant clusters would create a linkage from historic downtown to the new development towards Route 59 and the area would be pedestrian friendly. He noted that the condos would maintain the character of the adjacent neighborhoods. He noted further that the rowhouses would replicate the two-story style of the neighborhood, be constructed of mixed materials and have 10-15 foot parkways.

Mr. Gruen commented that action is the next step to make the plan viable and encourage redevelopment. He added that the next step also includes infill development, utilizing the City-owned land for incentives and test marketing the plan with developers. He noted that the determination needs to be made when it is not profitable to make improvements to a site and what makes the property more desirable. He noted further that rowhouses and townhouses are marginally feasible for the downtown. He commented that retail space is marginally feasible without parking costs. He added that subsidized parking will facilitate feasibility of private development.

Mr. Steve Mazzeffi stated that he was a local realtor and question how rowhouses would fit in as far as size and pricing. Mr. Gruen responded that the rowhouses would be between 1,600 and 1,800 square feet and cost approximately \$270,000 up to \$310,000. Mr. Mazzeffi asked which should come first: rowhouses does not attract retail and retail does not attract rowhouses. Mr. Gruen answered that there is more market demand for residential first even without the retail. He added that adding residential uses would create confidence for the future. He added further that the City has acquired favorable properties and is encouraging property owners to cooperate on developments of other sites, such as the bank.

Mr. Ken Tinnes, 314 Fairview, asked what businesses would be appropriate for Main Street. Mr. Savoy responded that a restaurant cluster, not traditional retail and an arts community are proposed for the downtown. Mr. Gruen noted that existing retail buildings are not responsive and are vacant. He noted further that there are not huge demands for robust retail. He added that our downtown could support service providers, restaurants, artists but not department or hardware stores. He commented that the City has Gallery 200 where artists could leave a piece of art for six weeks.

Mr. Gene Pogreba, a Deacon at the West Chicago Bible Church, noted that the plan relocates the church parking lot and creates more. He commented that the church is considering purchasing property on Chicago Street and asked how the church should move forward. Mr. Savoy responded that the proposed plan is considered the best use of the property for long term and it would create a better lot for the church as well as detention for the area. Mr. Gruen suggested that Mr. Pogreba meet with City staff and Mr. Savoy to work together to get the church's needs met. He added that the report is nothing to be alarmed about and this is a great opportunity to be aware of it.

Mr. Greg Salzman, 410 Colford Avenue, questioned what "marginally feasible" meant regarding rowhouses and townhouses. Mr. Gruen answered that for the investor or property owner can get a return with costs and different uses calculate a different scale. He added that to make a site work depends on the cost of the land and costs vary. Mr. Salzman asked if there was a 50% chance the rowhouses and townhouses would work. Mr. Gruen responded that the rowhouses and townhouses are doable. He noted that the condos are the higher risk and higher cost. He added that the challenge is the commercial uses, which are not unrealistic but are not easy. Mr. Salzman expressed concern about condos being in his back yard and even if the architecture is changed, at the end of the day he still has a four story condo in his backyard. He commented that the city needs to grow and he is excited about it.

At 8:10 the committee recessed. The meeting reconvened at 8:20.

Dave Libby, 114 Chicago Street, commented that envisioning arts to stimulate the downtown brings a noise impact on the neighborhoods. Mr. Gruen responded that visual artists, dance classes, music classes, etc. would create visitation to the downtown and that would be exciting. He added that it would be a good problem to have to worry about because people are drawn to that. Mr. Libby commented about using his house as a café and Mr. Gruen suggested that he meet with staff.

Mr. Bruce Askin, 218 E. Blair, questioned how the infrastructure would be handled and security for the downtown and additional students for the schools. Ms. Kalchbrenner responded that the fire, school and park districts would be a part of any plan. She noted that townhomes and condos typically generate fewer children than a single-family home. Mr. Askin commented that all the other taxing districts are hurting and in the summer there could be a problem with crowd control. Ms. Kalchbrenner responded that the City would have to plan ahead and budget properly as a result of development. Chairman Kwasman commented that growth has been successful because the City Council has placed an emphasis on commercial and industrial development which raises the equalized assessed value and does not generate students. He added that the City Council has kept a watchful eye on high-density projects and the school districts have thanked us for the cooperation.

Timothy Sasse, 120 Chicago Street, stated that he is not familiar with the procedure or process and how do homeowners make sure they are getting fair value for their homes. He also questioned the time frame. Mr. Gruen responded that the Phase II Summary Report is a long-term plan. He added that the areas most likely

to change first are the properties under one owner where development could take place. He added further that some areas depend upon the component of ownership participation. He commented that residents should talk to City staff to let them know their feelings, see what local property is selling for and determine the value with the plan and without the plan. He stated that he would encourage private transactions.

Jennifer Maglinte-Timbrook, a member of the Historic Preservation Commission, noted that the downtown is in a Historic District and questioned if the plan encourages revising buildings rather than tearing buildings down. Mr. Savoy responded that the plan does not recommend tearing down any existing historic building. He added that the recommendation is the new buildings should mimic the old and the pick up on themes.

Alderman Beifuss thanked everyone who came out this evening to provide public input and hear the conceptual plan. He added that it is important to hear the input from the consultants regarding economics and marketing and it is equally important to hear public input.

Chairman Kwasman stated that there would be a second meeting for the public to provide input. He added that the display boards will be located in City Hall for viewing by the public. He commented that he would like everyone to understand that the City Council does not want a cement City. He noted that in addition to the Central Main Street Study, there is another plan for City Hall to be located near Grobe's and it will all tie in together. He noted further that a lot of work has been completed and there is still more work to be done. He stated that if three meetings for public input are needed, three will be held. He thanked everyone on behalf of the City Council.

6. Unfinished Business. None.

7. New Business. Chairman Kwasman stated that he would like to schedule a walking tour of the Central Main Street Study area for Monday, March 26, 2007. He added that it would be good for the Committee members to see the area and the varying elevations. He requested that the consultants leave the display boards so people could view them at City Hall in the hallway.

8. Reports from Staff. None.

9. Adjournment. Alderman Stout made a motion, seconded by Alderman Beifuss, to adjourn. The members unanimously agreed. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Ericksen, Administrative Secretary

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