

Observer Report

Planning & Development Committee

Date: October 13, 2008

Observer: Nancy Bashook

Aldermen Present/Absent: All aldermen present

Staff Present: Dennis Marino, Dona Spicuzza, Dennis Cox

Media Present: Evanston Now

Meeting began: 7:20 pm (called for 7 pm)

Meeting ended: 8:38 pm

Items for Consideration

(P1) Recommended Allocation of CHDO Operation Funds

The Housing Commission recommends that \$81,830 in HOME funds available for operating grants to Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) be awarded to Evanston's five CHDOs in the amount of \$16,366.00 each.

Ald. Rainey asked to hear from each organization about how they are doing. It was suggested that for everyone's benefit, there was an explanation of HOME funds. Dona Spicuzza explained that these are federal funds that are allocated for rehabbing rental and ownership properties used for affordable housing. Those with incomes under 80% of area medium income are eligible. The HOME funds are for administering these programs. It is up to the city how to allocate funds. If funds not allocated, can still be used for development within a certain timeframe.

Keith Banks, from Evanston Community Development Association said that three units in his building are sold and three unsold. They have an aggressive marketing campaign. Families must live or work in Evanston, but he feels they have exhausted the Evanston market so need to expand into other areas. Positive responses but no contracts in this bad market. Higher end units are priced from \$165,000 to \$185,000. His operating budget is exhausted – doing fundraising. The allocation will be used for admin and operating expenses.

Ald. Rainey wants to see budgets. Troubled over how money is spent. She does not want to expand market into other communities. Dona Spicuzza will investigate if there can be rental and owners in same project. Ald. Moran says let's not exclude others and move on. Ald. Bernstein would like to use money for assisting people in getting funding. Issue held until next meeting.

(P2) Additional Condo Workshop in 2008

Request approval of \$1,000 to Lakeside Community Development Corporation to present a third condominium workshop in November to accommodate 60 people from the waiting list.

Unanimously approved.

**(P3) Ordinance 99-O-08 – Special Use for Convenience Store – 2536 Ewing Avenue
Consideration of an application for a Special Use for the property at 2536 Ewing Avenue for a convenience store (7-Eleven, formerly White Hen Pantry).**

This is a special use to operate with certain conditions in place: litter collection every three hours, deliveries between 7am-7pm, full access to alley, no idling over 5 minutes, lighting and signage requirements, discourage loitering. Neighbors want full compliance with stipulations and need a contact person 24 hours per day. Warned that if they don't comply, there will be serious consequences.

Unanimously approved.

Items for Discussion

(PD1) Discussion of Foreclosure Issues

A packet of information on addressing foreclosure issues has been prepared. Describes outcome of housing initiative, money for acquisition of foreclosed and abandoned properties, New Bank of America program will refinance certain loans, current local financial resources, two maps showing foreclosure in every neighborhood in Evanston. November 5 there is a foreclosure seminar at the Civic Center. Ald Jean Baptiste suggested that people in foreclose be contacted directly to see how city can help. Dona Spicuzza agreed to do more of this.

Comments: Ald. Wollin does a good job of trying to keep meeting on time at both ends. Mayor Morton came in at end of meeting to hurry things along and ask aldermen to stay in their seats so Council meeting could begin immediately. Other aldermen very sloppy about using their mikes.