

**Planning and Development Committee
Observer Report
May 14, 2007**

Observer: Nancy Bashook

Aldermen Present/Absent: Moran, Jean-Baptiste, Wynne, Wollin, Hansen, Bernstein, Tisdahl, Holmes. Rainey was absent.

Staff Present: Marino, Wolinski, Donna Spicuzza

Media Present: Evanston Review, Roundtable

Meeting began: 6:40 pm

Meeting Ended: 8:30 pm

Items for Consideration

(P1) Ordinance 40-O-07 – Renaming and Amending Title 4, Chapter 22 “Affordable Housing Demolition Tax & Affordable Housing Tax Fund” and Transferring Balance of the Mayor’s Special Housing Fund into the Newly Renamed Affordable Housing Fund

Consideration of a recommendation from the Housing Commission to Transfer the balance of the Mayor’s Special Housing Fund into the Newly Renamed Affordable Housing Fund. This item was held in committee for further discussion.

The Mayor’s Special Housing fund is not tied to any special guidelines and could be used to help potential homeowners in the lower middle income bracket. The staff proposed making the city’s affordable housing programs available to people earning up to 120 percent of the area’s median income. Ald. Moran objected to the proposal and wanted the funds available to those with lower incomes – 100% or less. This allows a greater number of people to be served by the funds. Some people at 120% have opportunities and knowledge of how to get help. He and others felt that the funds should be utilized to subsidize the poorest.

Ald. Wollin said she favored workforce housing programs that would help policemen, firefighters and teachers and wants the Housing Commission to come up with a variety of programs that fit diverse segments of the population..

Ald. Wollin made a motion to lower median income from 120% to 100% and provide counseling services to help people get back on track. Sixty percent of the funds would be reserved for households earning 80 percent or less of the median and 40 percent would be available to people earning from 80-100 percent of the median. Ald. Wynne suggested that the aldermen receive a report every six months showing how many people are being helped and how many request help.

Motion approved.

(P3) West Side Master Plan for Sub-Areas 1,2,&3

Consideration of extending the Moratorium in the West Side TIF for an additional 45 days.

Concern is density and affordability. Staff met with six different commercial entities and had a fruitful discussion.. Still some concerns but better understanding of public/private partnership for expanding streets.

Master Plan process – 50-70 citizens participated in this grassroots process. There were differences of opinion but a fair synthesis of everyone’s perspective. Rezoning of property potentially from industrial to residential. There is a stronger demand in Evanston for residential development. We should work to retain and expand the commercial entities that are currently in Evanston. Cahill and National Awards will stay for now. They could sell to another business.

Citizen, Carlis Sutton, of 1821 Darrow Ave. claimed the plan would lead to gentrification that would displace long-time residents. Claims it would be a complete elimination of the black community if the plan goes through. When infrastructure is improved taxes are increased. A zoning change will need to go through a public process. Claims citizens have not been informed of public meetings.

City Planning Director Dennis Marino said that most of the new construction is either on vacant land, former railroad right of way or industrial property, much of which is vacant. That would not lead to displacement. He said that successful development of the area may lead to an increase in the value of neighboring properties which could in turn result in higher assessments.

Sutton proposed that the plan be revised to reduce the number of new housing units permitted, but Wolinski said if density is decreased, that will invite more gentrification – the fewer units, the more they will sell for. It also may turn developers off to the plan.

City Planner Susan Guderly said the plan is designed to appeal to people at different income levels, ranging from large apartment buildings and six and nine flat apartments through townhomes, duplexes and small-lot detached single-family homes. Some units would be affordable at market rates, while others could be made affordable through housing assistance programs.

Ald. Jean Baptiste and Moran pushed for language in the proposal that there would be oversight of the project to ensure that residents are not put out through gentrification. The plan was approved as a land-use plan, but the total plan was not approved.

(P4) Ordinance 46-O-07 – Extension of West Side TIF Moratorium

Consideration of extending the Moratorium in the West Side TIF for an additional 45-days.

The moratorium will end on May 18.

**(P5) Ordinance 56-O-07 – Special Use Request for 1245 Chicago Avenue
Consideration of a Zoning Board of Appeals recommendation for approval of a special use request to establish a membership organization.**

This organization is a private club for use by musicians for educational and performance purposes. There would be public programming, outreach programs for underprivileged audience. A music and instrument collection would be housed in the building. Property taxes would be paid. There was a community meeting and people were very supportive. The noise factor was addressed. The interior would be insulated but there could be noise coming in from landscaping, dumpsters, etc.
Unanimously approved.

Bill Dunkley, the new Zoning Administrator, was introduced.

Comments: It was very difficult to hear throughout the meeting. A citizen called out for the aldermen to use their mikes. Ald. Tisdahl said they were just for recording, but we all agreed that if they spoke into the mikes we could hear better. They tried.