

Observer Report
Planning & Development Committee
July 14, 2008

Observer: Nancy Bashook

Aldermen Present/Absent: All present

Staff Present: Dennis Marino, Donna Spicuzzi, Ken Cox, Bill Dunkley

Media Present: Bob Seidenberg

Meeting began: 7:25 pm

Meeting ended: 8:30 pm

Items for Consideration

- (P1) **Ordinance 86-O-08 – Zoning Ordinance Map Amendment – 1829-31 Simpson**
Consideration of a recommendation from the Plan Commission to change the zoning designation of the property at 1829-1831 Simpson Street from the R3 Two-Family Residential District to the MU Transitional Manufacturing District. The initial request of the applicant and property owner, Flepspace, LLC, was to amend the Zoning Ordinance Map for the property at 1829-31 Simpson Street from the R3 Two-Family Residential District to the B1 Business District.

Bill Dunkley, Zoning Administrator, said this has been a long and difficult case. This property was rezoned to R3 in 2002. Community members want R3 zoning. Applicant proposes to use as a craftsman workshop to do cabinetry. B1 allows for using the property in this way.

Ald. Holmes explained why she would vote against this recommendation. This is a residential area. In 2006 she became aware of issues with the building. Other businesses were not allowed to purchase the building, but she saw someone working there who continues to operate. She is supporting the residents request to retain the R3 zoning and made a motion to reject the recommendation of Plan Commission. Ald. Tisdahl agreed with her that the issue is zoning.

Ald. Bernstein noted that the applicant was not present and thought this strange. He suggested getting the police out to stop the applicant from operating. The applicant is not a resident of this location.

Ald. Rainey explained that this property is a gross violation of all sorts of things and has a long history. But she also supported an artisan studio being in an R3 district. Home-based business is allowed. An artisan studio is a special use and perfect for the location.

The motion to reject the Plan Commission's recommendation was approved by all.

- (P2) **Plan commission Recommendation to Deny a Planned Development and Map Amendment for 1031 Sherman Avenue**
Consideration of recommendation of the Plan Commission to deny an application for a planned development and rezoning of subject property. The property is currently located within the R3 and MUE Zoning Districts. The request is to rezone the property to C1a zoning District.
This is an ill-conceived project and not in context with the neighborhood. Ald. Bernstein moved to accept recommendation of Plan Commission. Approved.

Items for Discussion

- (PD1) **Discussion of Process for Considering Proposed Amendments for a curb Cut to the Approved Planned Development for 1890 Maple Avenue**
Please see the enclosed letter requesting P&D consideration of a proposed curb cut on Emerson to serve the proposed development approved for 1890 Maple Avenue.
The 1890 Maple Ave. apartment project was approved almost a year ago with a commitment to secure a grocery store, if possible. Micheal Deegan, a real estate consultant for Trader Joe's, has been looking in Evanston for 8 years. He said that this space meets their needs. There is a Letter of Intent and they are close to signing a lease. Mr. Deegan explained that the challenge for grocery stores is parking, and with the proposed change this site will work well. The only change in the original plan for the project would be a 24 foot curb cut where shoppers and tenants in cars would enter and leave.

Ald. Hansen cautioned about traffic in the area. The architects have worked with staff, and they are comfortable with the traffic pattern. Staff wants the developer to pay for loss of meter spaces

A motion to amend the ordinance to place the curb site on Emerson was approved 8-1 (Hansen)

- (PD2) **Local Resources for Foreclosure Prevention in Evanston**
An informational packet has been prepared and enclosed highlighting local resources for foreclosure prevention in Evanston.
Dona Spicuzza explained that the packet was prepared in response to the request at the last meeting. It will appear in *Highlights* and the city website and provide information as well as education. One key obstacle is that people deny there is a problem and keep hoping things will get better.

Ald. Rainey is concerned with the quality of the counseling being referred. She wants to be sure that before we refer anyone, we check out the resource.

Ald. Baptiste is following the issue at the circuit court level and is asking the judge to be proactive. He wants to schedule meetings in churches and other locations and bring in experts to talk with people about the issues. He is willing to work on this and ask the

judge to make people available to speak. His concern is that the city is not looking at the foreclosure issue at the level of crisis it is.

Ald. Rainey suggested that the Cook County Legal Assistance Program be added to the list of resources.

Ald. Tisdahl suggested that affordable housing funds be used to prevent foreclosures. Others agreed with this approach. Dennis Marino said that staff is aware of the seriousness and that it is difficult to find mechanisms for refinancing.

Comments

The meeting started almost one hour late. Ald. Wollin (new chair) was apologetic. She did a good job of leading the meeting and was very excited that they finished on time. It was obvious the committee is very happy about Trader Joe's commitment.