

Observer Report
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Monday, August 13, 2007

All aldermen present.
Meeting started at 7:10
Press - Roundtable
Observer: Ruth Singer

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

(P1) Request for Affordable Housing Funds from Connections for the Homeless for HMIS Matching Funds
Consideration of the Housing Commission recommendation to approve Connections for the Homeless request for \$11,035 in matching funds for a HUD mandated and HUD-funded Homeless Management information System for the Evanston Alliance on Homelessness. Connections received \$10,000 from the Mayor's Special Housing Fund for the same purpose in 2005.

Connections (Mr. Terry?) spoke and Rainey asked for some way to receive accountability. The aldermen should be in the information chain. Currently they don't have a mechanism that triggers questions of how many tenants, don't know that property has been condemned. Connections will supply information to aldermen. Moran said Building Department has information that they should share. Follow up once a year.

Unanimously approved.

(P2) Request for Affordable Housing Funds from Housing Opportunity Development Corporation for repairs to 1930 Jackson
Consideration of the Housing Commission recommendation to approve HODC's request for \$84,760 for rehab of interior and exterior of a 2-flat at 1930 Jackson. HOME funds cannot be used because \$44,000 in HOME funds was used in 2004 and the affordability period is still in place.

This was a very contentious item as this street on Jackson is plagued with drug dealing and a shooting occurred next door. Mary Ellen Tamasy, the new director of HODC, says that although the coach house in the back has been safe the two flats (has a 3 and a 4 bedroom apartment) is hard to keep rented. Drug dealers have hidden their drugs in the siding in the building and the last tenants who left did the walls for plumbing repairs.

All the aldermen who spoke said they intended to vote for the proposed funding but they each prefaced their comments by saying the Richard Hoening was good at acquiring property but was poor at managing it. Ms. Tamasy reminded the aldermen that she just began her work in February. She also proposed to rehab the two apartments at 1930 and sell them moving the people currently living there to 1929 Jackson (I might have mixed this up) (Until neighborhood is stabilized this seemed to be the cart before the horse) Then Wolinski indicated one owner occupied house on Jackson was causing the problems. Wolinski was criticized by Hansen, Baptiste and Holmes for not inspecting houses on a more timely basis. Wolinski admitted not inspecting houses on the block in four years. Hansen said that because it is a Community Development Block Grant area it is to be inspected every two years. Holmes said that nobody cares. They need lighting and that it's not a tenant issue. Consider people who want to remain in the area and want the property kept up.

Unanimously approved.

(P3) Resolution 44-O-07 - Institute a Down payment Assistance Program with HOME Funds and local Affordable Housing Funds

Consideration of a staff recommendation to reserve \$185,000 in HOME funds and \$155,000 in Affordable Housing Funds for a pilot down payment program that would provide forgivable loans of up to \$30,000 to households under 100%AMI purchasing a home in Evanston.

What is the likelihood of low and moderate income people finding mortgages. If banks tighten up on loans we will be providing a product that they can't get at the bank.

Wolinski was asked about the PUD money coming into the Affordable Housing Fund. Only Rosak is in arrears - hasn't paid anything. Wolinski is in discussions with him. There seemed to be some question of when they pay - is it after all units are occupied?

Baptiste said they need to be able to track what we are doing, how much money to allocate to people below 80% of AMI or less.

Unanimously approved.

(P4) Ordinance 78-0-07 Amending Section 4-2-2 of the City Code to Prohibit Windowless Rooms in New Construction

A reference from Wynne to eliminate windowless habitable spaces in new construction

This was held for a later discussion of kitchens and dens.

(P5)Major Variation Request at 605 Davis Street

Consideration of a no Zoning Board of Appeals recommendation (2-2) to approve the request by Tim heridan, with permissions from 605 Davis LLC, for a major variation to construct a one story commercial building at 605 Davis. The proposed building would require one short off-street loading berth and the applicant requests zoning relief from this requirement to allow zero loading berths on the subject property.

They plan for three tenants. Deliveries are made at rear of building. (This has been an empty space for 25 years and a real blight on Davis Street)

Approved Unanimously

Meeting ended at 8:20