

Observer Report
Planning & Development Committee

March 8, 2010

Observer: Nancy Bashook

Aldermen Present: Wilson, Wynne, Holmes, Rainey, Jean Baptiste

Staff: Leeman Walker, Dennis Marino, Bill Dunkley

Media: EvanstonNOW, Roundtable

Meeting began: 6:50 pm

Meeting ended: 8:25 pm

Items for Consideration

(P1) 1609 Florence Avenue and 1519 and 1525 Davis Street Plat of Subdivision and Consolidation Approval

Staff recommends approval of the attached proposed plat of subdivision and consolidation of 1609 Florence Avenue and 1519 and 1525 Davis Street for the purpose of allowing the construction of detached garages on 1519 and 1525 Davis Street to provide required off-street parking. The two resulting improved lots would each be large enough to allow the construction of a detached garage, accessed via the existing curb cut and driveway on Florence Avenue.

Approved.

(P2) Ordinance 17-O-10: Granting a Special Use for a Type 2 Restaurant at 1729 Sherman Avenue "Jimmy John's "

Staff and the Zoning Board of Appeals recommend adoption of Ordinance 17-O-10 granting a Special Use permit to operate a Type 2 Restaurant "Jimmy John's" at 1729 Sherman Avenue. The applicant Thomas Ryan III proposes relocating the existing Jimmy John's at 824 Clark Street to this location.

Ald. Fiske explained that Jimmy John's, currently on Clark and Benson, park delivery vehicles in front of the restaurant or under the viaduct. If this happens on Sherman, would create a problem, taking away parking from retail stores. She would like an amendment that prohibits parking on the street or in the alley.

Tom Ryan, the owner, and Tom Ryan Jr. explained that if drivers park their vehicles at a meter, they pay the meter. Ald. Wynne - we want as many metered spaces as possible for patrons of downtown businesses. There are 3-4 delivery trucks during lunch and one in the evening. It's a quick delivery - in and out. Aldermen agreed on an amendment to the conditions: Drivers will be encouraged to park on Clark Street, and a maximum of two trucks will be allowed on Sherman

Approved with amendment.

(P3) Recommended Denial of Major Variance Application for 2328 Isabella Street

At the request of Ald. Tendam this item is held in committee.

(P4) Request for Extension of Planned Development for 959 Dobson Street

Staff recommends extending the expiration date of the 959 Dobson Planned Development -- granted by Council with ordinance 14-O-07 - by three years, to March 2, 2013, given the economic downturn in residential housing. The planned development currently expires on March 2, 2010. The applicant requests an extension of five years, to March 2, 2015.

Ald. Wilson started with the statement that he is reluctant to grant a three year extension. At this point Ald. Rainey became very upset and accused him of making an arbitrary statement without knowing anything about the project. She has been involved with the project for 4-5 years, dealing with very reliable people who run an Evanston business and have provided all sorts of services to the community. Ald. Wilson explained that he had nothing against the people that he was only making a policy statement that developers should come back sooner to explain the status of the planned development.

Then Ald. Rainey said it was proper etiquette to call the alderman in whose ward there is an issue before making a statement in public. Ald. Wilson said there is a distinction between an attack and a discussion - he did not attack.

Approved 3 year extension.

(P5) Withdrawn

(P6) Approval to Match Federal Funds for Varsity Theatre Renovation

Staff requests authorization from City Council to submit a Letter of Intent to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) regarding a matching grant opportunity through the Mayors' Institute on City Design 25th Anniversary Initiative.

This is an opportunity for the city to apply for a matching grant of \$50,000 for a feasibility study for the former Varsity Theater to be a Performing Arts Center. Ald. Fiske is excited about this opportunity . There would still be retail on the first floor.

Approved.

(P7) Consideration of request to Waive Transcript Fee - Zoning Board of Appeals Case No.09ZMJV-0082

Planning and Development Committee Chair Melissa Wynne received a request from Arthur Newman, attorney for George Gaines, the appellant of a decision of the Zoning Administrator to a use at 600 Haven to waive the cost of all transcript fees related to the case.

One issue here is whether the appellant was advised in advance that there would be a transcript fee. The appellant says no, he was not. Bill Dunkley claims that there is a policy that everyone is explained the process and the fee. They don't want anyone to be surprised. This is on the application and the chart and also referenced on the web.

Another issue is that a transcript fee can run into thousands of dollars, depending on how many pages of transcript. Applicants are not made aware of the potential amount.

Ald. Jean Baptiste raised the concern that the high fee could deter citizens from coming forward to challenge decisions by the ZBA. The attorney believes you shouldn't need to pay to object . Motion to waive current invoice, however, if appellant takes this to circuit court, they will pay for the transcript

Approved. Staff was directed to analyze and recommend a more reasonable approach for the future. At the next meeting they are to show all appeals of the zoning administrator's decisions.