

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION
VILLAGE HALL- ROOM 101
July 11, 2017
7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair David Mann; Commissioners Lawrence Brozek, Jeremy Burton, Doug Gilbert, JoBeth Halpin, Greg Marsey, Paul May and; Glenn Brewer (welcomed)

EXCUSED: Commissioner Kristin Nordman

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Failor, Village Planner; Jacob Karaca, Plan Commission Attorney

Roll Call

Prior to Roll Call Commissioner Marsey commented regarding former Commissioner Mark Gartland's non-renewal. Chair Mann called the meeting to order. Roll was called. A quorum established. .

Non-Agenda Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Mann directed commissioners to the February 2, 2017 draft minutes. Commissioner Burton noted a change on page one. Commissioner Marsey moved to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Brozek seconded. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Chair Mann moved to the public hearing.

PC 17-01: 1000 Lake Street; Albion Residential LLC. The Applicant seeks approval of an 18 story mixed use planned development consisting of approximately 9,500 square feet of first floor commercial space, 265 dwelling units, 235 enclosed vehicular parking spaces, and 265 enclosed bicycle parking spaces. The applicant is requesting an allowance to increase the building height from 80 feet as required in Section 3.9.4 E(1) of the Zoning Ordinance to a height of approximately 199 feet, an allowance to increase density from the allowed 40 dwelling units as regulated in Section 3.8.3 A(1)b of the Zoning Ordinance to 265 dwelling units, and an allowance for setbacks and landscaping along the north property line from a required 10 foot setback to zero feet required in Section 3.8.3 B(2) and along the east property line from a required 5 foot setback to zero feet 3.8.3 B(1). The applicant is requesting no landscaping within the required setback areas 6.4.2 A.

ALBION PLAT OF SUBDIVISION: The applicant is also seeking a subdivision of land as depicted on the Final Plat of Subdivision titled "Albion at Oak Park" submitted with the planned development application

Chair Mann gave an overview of the rules and procedures for the public hearing. First will be opening statements from the applicant; staff from the Village of Oak Park; and staff from the Park District of Oak Park. Then the applicant's testimony and witnesses, staff reports and witnesses followed by Commissioners' examination any information presented to that point. Then cross examination of the applicant's witnesses by the Park District of Oak Park (who was the only registered cross examiner). Next would be public testimony, starting with those favoring, then opposed, then neutral to the project. Next will be commissioner deliberations and closing statements.

Mr. William McKenna, the attorney representing Albion, made an opening statement. Mr. McKenna presented the plan development application of Albion which proposes to build a structure at 1000 Lake;

18-story, 265-unit apartment building mixed use. The applicant requests four specific types of relief under the underlying zoning code;

- 1) 265-units (where 40 are allowed as of right),
- 2.) Height of 198 feet 6 inches (where 80 feet is allowed as of right),
- 3.) Seeking to reduce required yards and building setbacks to 0 feet at the alley, and
- 4.) Relief from some of landscaping requirements for sight perimeter landscaping.

Mr. McKenna introduced the following team members;

1. Jason Koehn – President of Albion
2. Andrew Yule – Vice-President of Development for Albion
3. Ray Hartshorne – Architect with Hartshorne Plunkard Architecture firm
4. Paul Alessandro – Architect with Hartshorne Plunkard Architecture firm
5. Mark Duntemann – Arborist with Natural Path Urban Forestry
6. Benjamin Skelton – engineer with Cyclone Energy Group
7. Javier Milan – traffic engineer, with KLOA
8. Ted Wolff – landscape architect, Wolff Landscaping

Mr. Failor presented the staff report where he discussed the plan development requirements, allowances, comprehensive plan, DTOP Master Plan, Subdivision proposal, and compassing benefits. Mr. Failor indicated that Wight and Company would provide an architectural review, Mr. Bill McKenna, Village Engineer, would provide a traffic review and Dr. James Kielbaso, a registered forester consulting for the village, would provide an analysis of the applicant's Shadow Study Report.

Mr. Mark Burkland, general counsel to Park District of Oak Park provided an opening statement.

All non-public speakers were sworn in.

Mr. Jason Koehn provided a history about the Albion company.

Mr. Andrew Yule reviewed the project details and spoke to the objectives of the project and the positive impacts on the community.

Mr. Ray Hartshorne, Architect, Hartshorne Plunkard Architecture – provided background and information on his firm; his expertise with mixed-use residential apartment buildings and discussed the opportunities available near and within the proposed building. Mr. Hartshorne presented details about the materials proposed for the building.

Mr. Paul Alessandro, Architect, Hartshorne Plunkard Architecture presented the plans of the building as well as the Shadow Studies.

Mr. Mark Duntemann, owner of Natural Path Urban Forestry Consultants, said his field of expertise was ecosystem management and urban forestry management. Mr. Duntemann shared his history and experience. He was retained by Albion to review the Shade Study and provide his feedback. He stated that during the bulk of the growing season, from April to the beginning of September, 97% of Austin Gardens received 9 hours of direct sunlight. The remaining 3% in the S/E corner of park will receive 3 hours in April, and in May – August 5 hours. A concern has been stated that the S/E corner would get more shade over the growing season. During the growing season, the north half of the park would not get any shade from the proposed project. It will not affect current pre-settlement Oaks. Overall, his findings were that 97% of the park would not be affected by shading from the proposed project. The S/E corner will get additional shade; but he believed the effect on the trees in the S/E corner will be minimal and the Oaks will not be affected at all.

Mr. Benjamin Skelton, President of Cyclone Energy Group, a licensed professional engineer and certified building energy modeling professional. Albion asked Mr. Skelton to study the impact of the proposed development on the existing environmental center to determine the impact of shading on the production of electric generation created for the environmental center. Study findings: First building added to the study was Vantage which contributed 11.25% degradation. In addition, the proposed Albion project contributed 2% degradation in the ability to generate solar electric power. Cyclone Energy Group concluded the 2% was insignificant and would not impact the net zero goal of the project or the existing lead platinum certification.

Mr. Javier Milan, senior consultant of KLOA, Inc. prepared the traffic study and collected traffic count data from the Village of Oak Park. The Traffic Study also included observations of the current traffic conditions in the area. Mr. Milan explained the reasons for current traffic congestion in the area and how the four developments (Vantage Oak Park, Emerson, the development at Harlem & South Blvd. and District House) will impact the current traffic patterns. Based on the capacity now and the simulations conducted, all intersections in the area are expected to operate similarly to what was happening today, with a small change in the overall delay due to the fact the proposed development was close to the downtown Oak Park area and in close proximity to the train stations, CTA stations and other modes of transportation.

Commissioner Marsey asked Mr. Milan for clarification. Mr. Milan responded there was not as high of a demand on the automobile due to the other transportation options available.

Mr. Yule stated that he appreciated the opportunity to talk to the community. He and Mr. Jim Prescott, Albion's Public Relations expert attended 20-30 meetings with local neighbors, many at Delia's. Mr. Yule shared some questions which were asked during the community meetings. Mr. Yule outlined the contributions Albion will make: Housing Forward, Oak Park Housing Center and Oak Park Affordable Housing Fund will each receive a contribution, OPRF Community Foundation (Austin Garden's Trust). They will set aside \$170,000 for landscaping initiatives in Oak Park. An escrow account will be setup for Austin Gardens for emergency repair or replacement during construction. They will also facilitate an OPRF High School Training Program.

Mr. Failor stated that as of 5: today staff has received 48 emails from the public; only 5 in support, 1 neutral, plus 5 letters from the business community in support of the project. Mr. Failor explained the zoning ordinance regulations and the allowance requests. He stated that the Applicant must prove and the Plan Commission must confirm the applicant will satisfy the standards; will achieve some or all of zoning ordinance objectives, and be consistent with comprehensive plan's goals and objectives.

He said the village's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2014 after extensive public review, and changed the recommendation for the subject site. The Downtown Master Plan adopted in 2005 recommended this site become a plaza. However, a plaza has never been a consideration for the property owner, the Village, nor the Park District of Oak Park as it was not economically feasible and would be costly to manage and maintain. In the downtown Master Plan the recommendation indicated what it would take to revitalize the downtown relative to density and housing. It has been a guide for the Plan Commission in the past.

Mr. Failor reviewed the subdivision request. The parking lot behind the 1000 Lake Street building with the 37 parking spaces belongs to the 1010 Lake Street building. The property owner of 1000 & 1010 Lake Street was in support of an agreement to allow that subdivision to occur, so long as the 37 parking spaces be reintroduced into the new development. Mr. Failor mentioned that the Applicant will be going to the Historic Preservation Commission on Thursday, July 13 to discuss the design for the building. Code requires if a development is within 250 feet of a historic landmark, a discussion must be had with the HPC to determine whether or not there is an impact to the nearby historic landmark structure - which was

the Nineteenth Century Club. The Applicant also was in contact with the Oak Park Area Arts Council on the public art component. Mr. Failor said that there will be an architectural review report by Wight & Company; the village's architectural design consultant.

Mr. Rich Van Zeyl, Wight & Company, said they met with HPA to review architectural design options. He stated that the style of Albion's architecture is Modern, which is appropriate for development at this location. The architect has successfully broken down the massing into smaller parts to reduce the visual bulk of the project relative to the context. The podium of the building that contains the vehicle parking has hidden its function effectively and the garage will be mechanically ventilated which will prevent views of cars and headlights from the surrounding properties. They reviewed the pallet of materials with the architect and find it will be of high quality construction and detailing. The balconies on the center floors of the building as viewed from Austin Gardens, in some early documentation were not showing consistently between elevations and renderings which were corrected for this evening's presentation, but still feels some of the earlier versions, where the balconies were segmented on the Austin Garden side were more successful and felt better within the massing in the architecture. Wight and Company was supportive of the development of the open space west of the building between this property and its neighbor. This would be a great public amenity and will work very well with the restaurant in the S/W corner of the project. However, there were a few concerns with the functionality of the space. The loading docks and dumpsters were in the space now. They would like to see more plans and arrangements on how this will work. Some documentation that would show a direct connection into Austin Gardens, but the actual conditions were not quite as direct. The cistern from the new environmental center is on that axis, so what feels like a gateway or pathway needs to be refined and rethought. In general, they support this project and believe the design will be an interesting addition to the Lake Street corridor. The shifting massing of the tower will create a unique architectural feature visible from around the village and the Green line trains. The pedestrian experience will be greatly enhanced, particularly with the development and its neighbor.

Mr. McKenna said he reviewed the data prepared by KLOA and a traffic model created for the greater downtown area from Harlem to Euclid and South Blvd to Ontario. Staff ran scenarios to figure out ways to improve traffic on Lake Street, both current and long term, separate from work associated with this development. This was used to figure out current and long term conditions from the development. This study includes traffic conditions for already improved developments in the village in the area: Emerson, Vantage, District House and Lincoln development. KLOA's study projections go out to 2021; this study has projections which go out to 2025 – this time variance will create slight differences in the study results. Staff recommends some short-term improvements like signal timing changes. The long term improvements include the Albion traffic. Discussion ensued about traffic at various intersections.

Dr. James Kielbaso, spoke about the shade report which Mark Duntemann presented. He stated that eleven trees in the southeast section were mostly impacted by shade. Three were old Norway Maples with a lot of girdling roots. There were trees which were already problematic. The Norway Maple and the Siberian Elm was also invasive. He cautioned using tolerance description on page nine of Mr. Duntemann's report. Dr. Kielbaso believed this was only intended to be for light. Water, soil, urban conditions can make tree more or less tolerant.. The S/E corner will be a little bit slower in its growth, just a small percentage, earlier in the year. He said trees need 6-8 hours of sunlight a day and there will be enough light. There might be a slight delay in biological activity in the S/E corner. The snow may last a little longer and the soil a little cooler until the sun gets a little higher. He stated that he agrees with Duntemann's report. He thought the Norway Maples may be gone regardless if anything was developed here. He said the White Pines will probably be okay as they were a little more tolerant. The Norway Maples are quite tolerant in most situations, as there has been some construction activity for a new building that may have already impacted the soils in that area. Commissioner Brozek asked if three or four trees would be lost in the next couple of years regardless of the Albion building. Dr. Kielbaso said if the trees were healthy, the Albion building would not have a negative impact on them.

Mr. Burkland began cross examination with Dr. Keilbaso. He asked about Dr. Keilbaso's visits to Austin Gardens and if he received any data from the Park District regarding tree conditions. Dr. Keilbaso explained he had not received nor asked for data from the Park District and only visited Austin Gardens today. Mr. Burkland asked about the timing of data collection in the Duntemann report. Dr. Keilbaso indicated inspection before leafing can make it difficult to determine the condition of a tree as it would be dormant. Mr. Burkland asked about tree age. Dr. Keilbaso said he would have to guess. Mr. Burkland asked about soil and micro and macro organisms affected by the shading. Dr. Keilbaso said he would not have the background to answer those questions.

Commissioner Marsey asked how Dr. Kielbaso was selected to give the report he gave and why. Mr. Rob Sproule, the village's Forestry Superintendent, stated the Village thought it would be beneficial to the planning commission to have an independent 3rd party opinion evaluate the Duntemann report. Commissioner Marsey asked if they reached out to the Park District to discuss the choice. Mr. Sproule replied no.

The commission discussed next possible meeting dates.

Commissioner Gilbert stated that he felt the wind study was lacking and requested the consultant to return to answer questions.

Other Business

None

Adjournment

Commissioner Burton moved to adjourn. Commissioner Brozek seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Christina Waters,
Recording Secretary