



## **Economic Development Commission**

**Wednesday, July 27, 2016  
Council Chambers Room**

### **Minutes**

#### **Commissioners Present**

James Persino, Chair  
Myles D. Berman  
Genelle Ioacca  
Patrick Kaniff  
Paul Levine  
Pat McCoy  
Terrence Strauch

#### **Commissioners Absent**

James Berger  
James Kucienski, Vice Chair

#### **Staff Present**

Tim Wiberg, Village Manager  
Steve McNellis, Community Development Director  
Arin Rubaci Uygur, Community Development Intern

#### **1. Call to Order/ Quorum Declaration**

Noting that a quorum of 7 members was present, the meeting was called by Chairman Persino at 8:07 AM.

#### **2. Minutes Approval**

Chairman Persino asked the Commission if any edits were to be made for the May 25, 2016 meeting minutes. Hearing no discussion, he then asked for a motion to approve. Commissioner Kaniff moved to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Berman seconded. Minutes approved by voice vote 7-0.

#### **3. Discussion on Current and Upcoming Development-Related Projects**

##### **A) Village-Initiated Projects of Development Interest**

Community Development Director McNellis then began the discussion on current and upcoming development projects by mentioning village-initiated business-friendly zoning

code amendments that the department is currently pursuing. The first one was for regulations on drive-through facilities. He indicated that in B3 zoning district fast food drive-through facilities are strictly prohibited, but staff believes they should make them available for special uses in B3. With the removal of prohibition, fast food drive-through facilities will be allowed in all districts but be subjected to special use permit and will be evaluated on a case by case basis in a public hearing. He also mentioned that regulations on drive-through facilities prohibit them from facing a public street and all drive-through facilities shall be located on the side or rear of the structure that is either facing the site's parking area or internal driving aisle. He noted that these regulations make it difficult for the drive-through facilities to locate, especially in corner lots.

Chairman Persino mentioned that most of the fast food restaurants on Touhy Avenue are number 1 or number 2 best-selling restaurants of their chains, regionally or nationally, and that Touhy Avenue is a desirable corridor and holds a lot of potential. Commissioner Levine noted that this is done in order to bring in fast food businesses so they should look into opportunities and further enhancement. Director McNellis mentioned that Culver's is already interested, but not applied yet. Village Manager Wiberg informed that this discussion began with Culver's and he added that Culver's is working on the project and even modifying their normal footprint to make it smaller to fit in the lot but they were told that they could not apply yet because of the prohibition. He indicated that when the prohibition removal suggestion was brought to the planning commission meeting, Barclay residents showed up against it. He reminded that the Barclay residents are living in a residential unit which was originally zoned as a commercial area. He suggested the Commissioners come to the Village Board meeting on August 16, 2016, to echo this morning's support for drive-through uses. Chairman Persino also noted that Barclay was once a commercial building and the Village allowed the developer to build residential there. He mentioned that he opposed that decision at the time and he thinks that the Village should not add any more residential in prime commercial area, but add more commercial uses. Village Manager Wiberg then added that Barclay residents opposed to the fast food drive-through noted it would increase the traffic, however, he indicated that 40,000+ cars go along Touhy Avenue per day and this will have minimal traffic congestion impact based on the high traffic count. Director McNellis again emphasized that Culver's is not a formal applicant yet.

Director McNellis then informed the commission that a moratorium on self-storage or warehouse uses was enacted on July 19, 2016, which involves M-B and O-1 zoning districts that have a frontage on Cicero, Devon, Lincoln or Touhy Avenues. He mentioned that the moratorium will give the Village time to review text amendments and the appropriateness of such uses on commercial arterial roadways. He added that the village will begin reviewing text amendments in September 2016 and make

recommendations by the end of 2016. Commissioner Levine inquired what kind of revenue the Village gets from self-storage facilities. Chairman Persino answered that it is just property taxes.

Director McNellis moved next to possible future text amendments, including those related to parking provisions. He noted that off-street parking formulations should be reviewed to see whether they are too high for current uses and as an example he mentioned that the existing regulations do not speak to the differences between a limited service restaurant (ie. drive-through) and a standard sit-down restaurant. He mentioned that he also found out that the current requirements for a hotel with a full-service restaurant would ask for separate parking spots for each use, however, staff believes there should be some sharing of spaces. He then mentioned that 8.5 foot stalls for long term parking might be appropriate, rather than 9' wide stalls for parking that turns over more frequently. Village Code does not currently permit stalls more narrow than 9' wide. Commissioner Kaniff inquired whether big stores have a variation in parking spaces for their employees and their customers. Director McNellis replied that he has not seen such an example but it might make sense for some establishments. Director McNellis then added that the Community Development Intern will look into all variations starting from 2008 to see if there are any consistent variations and prepare a report about it, for possible consideration for text amendments.

Director McNellis then moved on to the topic of signage and mentioned that Pole/Pylon signs are also constantly being approved as Special Signs with the required 18 feet height and 45 sq ft area limits. He added gas stations are consistently approved for those signs and it might make sense for them to be permitted "By Right". He also mentioned that for temporary events, like grand openings or special events, additional signs are allowed twice a year for 15 day period and the Village might consider increasing the frequency and the number of days allowed. He stated that sign regulations should be reviewed for business friendly amendments to help businesses in the Village in general. Village Manager Wiberg commented that Pole/Pylon signs were once too large and prevalent for all use types and new regulations at that time helped getting rid of the over-the-top signage but there may be a happy medium.

Director McNellis then moved to Devon Avenue Retail Overlay discussion. He stated that Devon Avenue has a potential for being a stronger commercial roadway and a retail overlay district might be considered for M-B zoned areas on Devon, similar to M-B retail overlay district along Touhy Avenue.

Director McNellis then moved on to provide a summary to the Commissioners about the Updated Comprehensive Plan. He said that the first meeting took place on March 12, 2015, followed by Community Workshop on April 9, 2015. Plan commission reviewed

the plan on April 13 and May 25, 2016. Plan Commission Recommendations were submitted on May 25, 2016 and the Committee of the Whole Review began on July 19, 2016 and will likely be completed in September. He mentioned several commercial policies from the Plan, including the market-driven acquisition and redevelopment of residential lots next to Lincoln Avenue for commercial viability. Chairman Persino expressed his approval and mentioned that he had advocated commercial overlay when he was working with the Lincoln Avenue Task Force to encourage mixed-use development. He mentioned that he changed his mind about new urbanism and that he now thinks that conventional setback requirements for residential make more sense. Village Manager Wiberg stated that developers have in the past expressed a desire to bring in multi-story mixed-use buildings especially to two sites, one on Devon and the other at Pratt & Cicero. He also noted that the mixed-use buildings provide a nice buffer for transitioning from commercial to single family units and in Lincolnwood there are no such transitions. He also informed the commission that some Board Members are not in favor of change and suggested the Commissioners come to the Village Board meeting and share their opinion if they are in favor of such developments on vacant lots.

Commissioner Ioacca questioned why they should be in favor of mixed-use buildings. Village Manager Wiberg explained that there is a lot of demand for apartments and there is a number of challenging vacant commercial spots where nobody wants to come up for just commercial uses because there is not enough density to support commercial uses. The density might be achieved by building multi-story mixed-use buildings. For those reasons the developers want to build mixed-use buildings and for the Village, it would improve taxation and community amenity and create synergy. Commissioner Ioacca then inquired why the Trustees and residents might oppose that. Village Manager Wiberg said that the residents would like Lincolnwood to stay as a single family village, new developments affect people's view and some Trustees think that multi-family buildings would bring unfavorable conditions. Chairman Persino asked whether it would help to guarantee Trustees that the development would have just owner-occupied condos.

Commissioner Ioacca commented that life style and living choices have changed and some people do not necessarily want to buy a house anymore because they transfer and/or are not as tied to one place. She added that such developments bring vibrancy to the community and people have started to prefer living in more vibrant areas where commercial and residential uses are mixed. Commissioner Levine mentioned that there was a mixed-use development proposal on Devon Avenue, the apartments that would be built were nice but one Trustee, in particular, voiced concerns about the people it would bring. He added that the Trustees should be persuaded. Commissioner Strauch then asked if anyone knows how many single family houses are rented right now and said that he does not know the exact number but knows there are many. Village Manager Wiberg

agreed and said that it was an excellent point. Chairman Persino stated that the burden on the school district might be questioned. Village Manager Wiberg said that he had been talking to school officials and they informed him that they have got the capacity and he added that every community is adding mixed-use developments to their built environment right now. Director McNellis mentioned that there will be a lot of 1-2 bedroom units in a mixed-use development and they are not really for large families with a lot of children. He also stated that the Village Board should be properly informed about these issues by Staff, the EDC and local business people. Chairman Persino noted that the developer should be questioned about their funding sources. If there are some governmental funds involved the regulations might require a certain number of affordable units. He suggested that it should be looked into.

Director McNellis moved on to other aspects of the comprehensive plan and stated that one intention is to limit vehicular access to lots from the front and rely on alley use. He stated that everybody would get more parking this way. He mentioned another change that is being discussed is the cross-access between adjacent commercial lots which would lead to fewer curb cuts. Chairman Persino shared his doubt about whether the owners would cooperate and stated that they might ask for money. Director McNellis commented on that it could be incentivized in a way like zoning bonuses.

Commissioner Levine commented on Village alley use and suggested paving them and putting in speed bumps. Village Manager Wiberg said that this would add millions of dollars of burden to the Village taxpayers. He mentioned also that there are actually some alleys that were paved years ago, but they are in horrible shape. He added the drainage is also a problem in the alleys and if they are paved they have to add sewer pipes, which would overload the existing infrastructure, so there is no easy answer.

## **B) Private Commercial Projects of Interest**

Director McNellis then continued his presentation by introducing recently-opened private development projects. He mentioned that Binny's Beverage Depot and Giordano's Carry-Out Restaurants are just opened and Lou Malnati's Restaurant expansion, the AT&T retail store and a multi-tenant plaza with Starbucks drive-through on 4320 Touhy are projects that are in the permitting/planning process. He noted that the AT&T store will be the first commercial development that is built in the MB Retail Overlay Zone and there will be more green spaces and less impervious surfaces with this project. Village Manager Wiberg stated that this shows that zoning works and that the Overlay Zoning made these lots more attractive for development.

Director McNellis then moved on to potential development projects. He stated that he had already mentioned Culver's. He noted Touhy Avenue Redevelopment parcels 4600 and

4656, for which developers have expressed interest in building multi-tenant units. He then added that the Puig site had a proposal for assisted living. He added the site would be partially used for assisted living and the rest will be used for another use to be determined. Village Manager Wiberg stated the Commissioners should pay attention to this site and come to the related Village Board meetings because this site has major arterials on two sides and a great potential for commercial development. He noted that the proposed assisted living development would just sit in a corner of the site leaving the rest vacant and he thinks the site actually holds more potential if all is used for one development. Commissioner Strauch then stated that Mr. Puig is also the owner of the ice rink next to the site and they have to reserve parking for the ice rink. He added that they are not using the ice rink that much during the day; it is mostly used on evenings and weekends. Chairman Persino mentioned that he talked to Trustee Patel and he informed him that Puig is considering the possibility of another rink or add a wing to the existing. Village Manager Wiberg said that in his opinion even the ice rink expansion might be a better use for the Puig site because it would then be a community amenity.

Commissioner Berman questioned whether current development patterns are schizophrenic and how did the Village come to the point it is at. Village Manager Wiberg explained that Lincolnwood was not initially planned and when it was developed during the 50s-60s there was no planning staff so there is no comprehensive plan behind most of the development. Nobody was looking from an urban planning point of view. He explained that they are now trying to locate different uses where it makes sense to create an effective tapestry. Commissioner Berman then commented that it requires some political will and that Touhy Avenue should definitely be used for commercial uses. He commented that people are most afraid of change and Skokie is benefiting from this and that this unwillingness will lead to Lincolnwood's demise. Village Manager Wiberg and Commissioner Ioacca agreed. Commissioner Ioacca added that the Village is a gold mine and they should decide what they want and where they want it and do it. Commissioner McCoy indicated that there are properties sitting there useless because of the unwillingness of the owners. Commissioner Berman said once the changes are done, the market will dictate their actions; the prices and taxes will rise so that it will be beneficial for the owner either to sell or rent it. Village Manager Wiberg once again emphasized that the commissioners should come to the Village Board meetings when they have strong feelings such as these. Chairman Persino asked to be directly invited via email when an important issue is going to be discussed. Director McNellis stated that he would make sure the EDC is notified, and he stated he also agrees with Commissioner Ioacca in that the Village should be actively involved in marketing and attracting businesses. He informed the commission that he will be attending the International Council of Shopping Centers' Chicagoland Retail Connection event and expects to promote the community and obtain a lot of leads for Lincolnwood.

Commissioner Berman then stated that he finds the argument of some Trustees regarding mixed-use development that will bring unfavorable people unrealistic since the Village is not commuter-friendly. Commissioner Strauch commented that the Village is already diverse and there is nothing wrong with it. Commissioner McCoy then questioned whether there is a way to find out what percentage of single family homes are rented. Commissioner Ioacca commented that the schools might have that information. Chairman Persino informed the commission that Palatine, IL requires every property owner to inform them whether and when they rent their properties and the renter's information .

Director McNellis then introduced the Hyatt Place Hotel proposal which will be a 5-6 story building with approximately 110 units. He stated that considering the diversity of the community there is a need for a facility where large weddings and all other sorts of events can take place. He informed that the company has completed their feasibility study and found there is a huge demand in the area and is now looking for loans. He commented a hotel will be good in many ways, including for commercial area promotion.

Director McNellis then moved on to Key Redevelopment Sites. He informed the commission that for the Purple Hotel site the developer has not followed up on the project. They had a key date on May 15 to show that they had obtained the necessary loans to go ahead with the project, but they did not provide that. He indicated that they were also supposed to remove the foundation within 30 days after that, but they did not do that either, so in July the Village filed a complaint in Cook County Circuit Court. He also informed that they are not expecting any compensation out of it, but did it merely to encourage zoning compliance or at least the owner to move on and find a new developer for the site. He mentioned that they know that understand the developer is financially in a difficult position right now and the property is in a foreclosure. Chairman Persino said that he has already met with 4 developers for the site and all of them seemed interested and are talking with the lender in Canada.

Director McNellis mentioned that for the Kow Kow Restaurant site, which is on a secondary commercial road, mixed-use development might be considered if there are no proposals for commercial development. He also mentioned there was a lot of interest but no deals have been done. Chairman Persino commented the price might be too high.

Director McNellis informed that a couple of properties on the Southeast Corner of Touhy and Crawford are vacant, with the Long John Silvers being owned by corporate, who have recently taken back the property from the previous franchisee. He noted that they have some concerns about the codes and they are discussing a pole sign. He stated that there is potential that this site might be a for-sale site in the future and with the Decorator

Hardware space for sale or lease a combined parking option for the entire strip might be something that could be considered.

Director McNellis then mentioned that for the former Dominick's site on McCormick Boulevard, they are trying to reach the property owner, but have not gotten any response yet. He also noted that within a couple of months their approvals will expire.

**C) Economic Development Work Plan Update**

Director McNellis then continued on to inform the commission about the Economic Development Work Plan. He mentioned that business site visits are in progress and he is working on the marketing brochure. He informed that he is talking to food trucks for the 25th year anniversary of the Village Campus, which will be celebrated with the community and this might build momentum for next year's probable food truck events. He mentioned that he will be attending ICSC Chicagoland Retail Connection event in August, which will provide an opportunity to get a large number of contacts for potential businesses. In the interim, he is working on a marketing e-mail to utilize in contacting businesses after that August 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**4. Reports**

**A. New Business Licenses/Building Permits**

Commissioners viewed the list of new business licenses for May and June 2016.

**5. Other Business**

Commissioner Levine inquired about Begyle and Director McNellis informed him that they are in for permit, moving forward and will probably be opened in November. With regard to a question on Jaffa Bakery, he also informed that he does not know the current situation between the former renter and the owner, but the equipment is there and the owner might be holding it until financial restitution is made. He noted that he will contact the owner to get information.

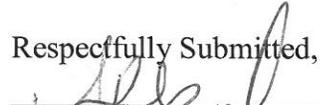
**6. Public Forum**

No member of the public desired to address the Commission.

**7. Adjournment**

By consensus, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
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Arin Rubaci Uygur  
Community Development Intern