



## **Economic Development Commission**

**Wednesday, August 26, 2015  
Council Chambers Room**

### **Minutes**

#### **Commissioners Present**

James Kucienski, Vice Chair  
Patrick Kaniff  
Paul Levine  
Pat McCoy  
Nadia Senuita  
James Berger  
Myles D. Berman

#### **Commissioners Absent**

James Persino, Chairman  
Terrence Stauch

#### **Staff Present**

Timothy M. Clarke, AICP, Community Development Director  
Aaron N. Cook, AICP, Development Manager  
Bob Merkel, Finance Director  
Caleb Miller, Community Development Intern

#### **Others Present**

Larry Elster, Trustee  
Jesal Patel, Trustee  
Bert Rance, Prudential Realty and Former EDC Member

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

Noting that a quorum of 7 members was present, the meeting was called to order at 8:02AM by Vice Chairman Kucienski.

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

Vice Chairman Kucienski moved to approve, as proposed, the July 22, 2015 meeting minutes of the Commission. Commissioner Berman seconded the motion. Motion approved by voice vote 6-0-1, with Commissioner Berger abstaining.

#### **3. Lincoln Avenue Properties and Development**

Director Clarke began the discussion on vacant properties along the Lincoln Avenue corridor. He started by noting the locations of the properties being discussed (6530, 6601,

and 6609-11 Lincoln Avenue) and two additional vacant properties with proposed developments at 6485 and 6733-35 Lincoln Avenue. The latter property, he explained, will be presented to the Plan Commission at the upcoming meeting on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. After Mr. Clarke noted the 6733 location is slated to be of mixed use, Trustee Elster inquired as to whether the residential units would be rental or condos. Mr. Clarke replied, saying the developer has suggested they would be rental apartment units.

Explaining that vacant properties are always unoccupied for a reason, Director Clarke moved on to discuss causes of vacancy. These include overpriced properties, unmotivated owners, poor marketing, the lack of a market in general, and poor/neglected property conditions, among others. He then moved on to list the tools the Village has made available to assist redevelopment and property occupancy in the area. First, all of the subject properties are a part of the Devon-Lincoln Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) District. Other tools identified include property tax abatement, Village acquisition and land assembly, code changes, and zoning relief.

Mr. Clarke then began discussion of the zoning requirements affecting the Lincoln Avenue properties, noting each property is located within the B-1 Traditional Business District, as well as the Business-Residential Transition Area overlay. He presented a list of uses that would be permitted if the structures were to be maintained, none of which were residential. This was then followed by a list of permitted uses and design requirements for new construction. In this case, residential units are permitted as a special use in the B-1 district, and commercial units are limited to 2,500 square feet.

#### **A. 6530 Lincoln Avenue**

Moving on to discussion of specific properties, Director Clarke began with the largest of the three, 6530 Lincoln Avenue. The property is currently on the market at \$1,650,000, and is one of the largest vacant properties in the Village at a parcel size of 46,000 square feet. This property, he explained, is currently owned by Brickyard Bank, who originally had plans to relocate its bank to this property which never materialized. He mentioned that he extended an invitation for Brickyard Bank to attend the meeting, but never received a response. Commissioner Levine then interjected saying the property is blighted and has been for years, and followed by asking what the Village can do to bring in a business to the site. Discussion ensued.

Discussion then followed regarding possible options. Bert Rance of Prudential Realty mentioned Clark Street Development, a Chicago firm that has been very active in the area as of late. He mentioned that Clark Street is looking at this property, but no official plans have been put forward. One idea he presented is the retrofitting of the current structure to

expand the shopping center to its southeast onto the property. Conversation ensued regarding possible incentives for development at the site.

### **B. 6601 Lincoln Avenue**

Director Clarke then moved on to the next property, owned by Village resident Mike Rayan and with a most recent listing price of \$1,199,000. Clarke noted that the property was acquired through foreclosure. The property, Director Clarke also noted, was recently taken off the market, but work is being done to the existing structure to improve its attractiveness and perhaps become more marketable. Mr. Rance and Commissioner Levine both agreed that the subject property is nearing a teardown condition because of its longtime vacancy.

Mr. Clarke also discussed his conversation with the owner of the property. He had mentioned that he is open to both leasing and selling the property, but has had trouble securing an occupant. The owner, Mr. Rayan, also expressed his concerns to the Director that the Village was not pro-development due to an earlier rejection of a mixed-use structure on Devon Avenue. Overall, however, the owner was happy to be contacted by Director Clarke regarding development of the property and was invited to come to the meeting, but declined due to a prior commitment.

### **C. 6609-11 Lincoln Avenue**

Discussion then moved on to the adjacent property to the northeast, currently owned by Gladys R. Wilson Associates, with the agent being Anna Cupello of Realty All Pro, Inc. Director Clarke mentioned that the owner and agent were invited multiple times to attend the meeting, and while thanking the Village for the invitation, they had no interest in attending the meeting.

Mr. Rance then noted that the property in question was quite challenging for developers. The parcel itself, he said, is fairly small for such a large building, and it would be difficult for them to fulfill parking requirements. Director Clarke mentioned that a developer in the past had expressed interest in a condominium development at the site, which would require one of the two buildings to be demolished. Other than that, however, there have been no calls or inquiries about the property, despite a \$100,000 reduction in the listing price, which now stands at \$1.8 million.

Discussion continued on whether the Village should purchase the property and demolish the building as a way to encourage redevelopment. Mr. Rance said that someone would, in fact, buy the property if it contained no structure, depending on the price. Trustee Patel spoke briefly about the idea, saying that there are residential properties at the rear of these

buildings that, if acquired and assembled with these two Lincoln Avenue properties, would make an attractive development site.

Discussion then moved on to how to promote development throughout the entire corridor. Commissioner Berman suggested that smaller property owners may not have the same resources or knowledge of incentives. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Berman noted that existing development and conditions along Lincoln Avenue are disjointed and unorganized, and development appears slow to come. Skokie, he says, has taken in many new businesses, and he asked what exactly led to this. Commissioner Levine responded by saying that the practices of Lincolnwood are still seen from previous administrations. He continued by saying the Village's main appeal to business is its location. Commissioner McCoy added that the price of the property is going to be the main factor in development in Lincolnwood.

Vice Chair Kucienski summarized the discussion of Lincoln Avenue development, indicating a Commission desire to review the 2005 Lincoln Avenue Task Force.

#### **4. Reports**

##### **A. Development Updates**

Director Clarke summarized the written Development Updates report as well as updates on other properties. He first discussed the Plan Commission's approval of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) amendment to allow a multi-tenant business center at the former Dominick's grocery site on Pratt and McCormick. Commissioner McCoy then noted Binny's Beverage Depot would not now be a tenant of the site, despite being included in previous plans. Director Clarke replied by noting the developer has agreed that 50% of the new development must be sales tax-generating.

Director Clarke continued by discussing the status of the new senior housing development proposed at the former Bell & Howell site, noting that the structure is mostly within code and will require only minor variations. He also discussed the closure of Lincolnwood Produce and its replacement with Binny's, which will take over the Produce store as well as the adjoining liquor store, while CVS Pharmacy will remain at the site. He then mentioned the Shoppes at Lincoln Pointe, formerly the Purple Hotel, which has reported ongoing progress in securing tenants but indicated they have not yet secured bank financing, and that they may be considering adding residential units as a necessary component in the plans for the site.

After conclusion of the development updates, Commissioner Berman inquired about how the community felt about the Lincolnwood Town Center, and whether it compares to the

downtown districts of Park Ridge and Evanston. Commissioner Senuita explained how the Town Center is much smaller than originally proposed, and that its size prevents numerous stores from opening on the site, unlike what is found at Old Orchard in Skokie. Discussion continued regarding the Town Center and its popularity, as well as how Evanston and Park Ridge were able to create walkable downtowns. Director Clarke mentioned that the Village has experienced push-back from the community when higher-density developments were proposed. That, along with the lack of train lines in Lincolnwood, has made it difficult for the Village to become more pedestrian-oriented. Trustee Patel also explained that this is a result of decades of strip mall and low-density development that Evanston and Park Ridge did not experience in their downtown business centers.

**B. New Business Licenses**

Commissioners viewed the list of new business licenses issued during the month of July 2015.

**5. Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

**6. Public Forum**

No member of the public desired to address the Commission.

**7. Adjournment**

After a motion from Vice Chairman Kucienski, the meeting was adjourned by consensus at 9:33 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

---

Caleb Miller  
Community Development Intern