



Economic Development Commission

**Wednesday, September 16, 2015
Council Chambers Room**

Minutes

Commissioners Present

James Persino, Chair
James Kucienski, Vice Chair
Patrick Kaniff
Paul Levine
James Berger
Terrence Stauch

Commissioners Absent

Myles D. Berman
Pat McCoy
Nadia Seniuta

Staff Present

Timothy C. Wiberg, Village Manager
Timothy M. Clarke, AICP, Community Development Director
Caleb Miller, Community Development Intern

Others Present

Jesal Patel, Trustee
Jacqueline Boland, Executive Director of the Lincolnwood Chamber of Commerce

1. Call to Order/ Quorum Declaration

Noting that a quorum of 6 members was present, the meeting was called to order at 8:06AM by Chairman Persino.

2. Minutes Approval

Jim Kucienski moved to approve, as proposed, the August 26, 2015 meeting minutes of the Commission. Commissioner Levine seconded the motion. Motion approved by voice vote 6-0.

3. Review of Lincoln Avenue Plan

Director Clarke began his presentation regarding the 2005 Lincoln Avenue Task Force Report. The purpose of the presentation, he said, was to summarize the findings as well as to review new developments that have resulted from the adoption of the Lincoln Avenue Plan. He discussed the composition of the Task Force, which included members

of the Economic Development Commission, Plan Commission and Village Board, as well as a community resident who took an interest in the process. In addition to the members, the Task Force was assisted by Village staff, input provided by residents and businesses, and a representative of the planning firm, Land Vision, Inc.

Director Clarke then moved on to discuss the methods used by the Task Force to analyze the Lincoln Avenue corridor. These included a windshield survey, a town meeting for community input, an image preference survey for residents, and examination by the Task Force of current planning tools as well as revitalization efforts of other communities.

Director Clarke then discussed the findings of the Task Force, which found that the development pattern along the corridor had been aging with marginal uses, and that Lincoln Avenue did not function as a vibrant asset of the community. Going forward, the Task Force created a vision for the corridor, several aspects of which were presented by Director Clarke. These included creating a sense of place for the corridor, making it a centerpiece of the community and a vibrant main street, creating an attractive and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, and establishing a lively and useful shopping and business environment. This vision, he added, diverged from the original zoning of the corridor, which intended for Lincoln Avenue to be primarily a banking and office district.

He then went on to present several concepts in planning for the corridor which were relatively new to the community. One of the biggest changes, Director Clarke mentioned, was the shift from setback to build-to requirements, which called for buildings to be closer to the sidewalk and prohibiting front-yard parking. Other concepts included traffic calming, design guidelines for buildings, creating civic focal points, form-based regulations, and New Urbanism.

The presentation then moved on to the recommendations put forward by the Task Force. For public streets and spaces, recommendations included median landscaping and parkway restoration, improved pedestrian crosswalks, designated parking lanes, a unified corridor streetscape plan, and a reduction in parkway curb cuts, among others. In terms of development regulations and design standards, recommendations included modifying the land use code to encourage new uses, the establishment of business district hubs, the creation of form-based regulations, regulating off-street parking locations, and improved business signage. Director Clarke mentioned that several of these recommendations had already been put into place.

Continuing the presentation, Director Clarke discussed individual developments that came after the adoption of the Lincoln Avenue Plan. The first was 6469 Lincoln, which is currently the site of the Oberweis Ice Cream and Dairy Store. Director Clarke mentioned

that this was the first project under the new plan, and was approved without variances or special use approval. He presented photographs of the site before the development and after, pointing out that the building was constructed closer to the street, with parking in the rear and a masonry wall was built along the property line as a buffer between residential and commercial property.

The next property Director Clarke discussed was the townhome development at 6521 Lincoln, which was formerly the site of Pedian Rug. This development, he mentioned, has recently received criticism from at least one Village trustee because it is a residential development. Trustee Patel added that a specific issue raised was the height of the building and its imposition on the adjoining residential homes. Manager Wiberg replied indicating that the height could have been the same if it were a commercial building.

Discussion ensued regarding residential properties abutting Lincoln Avenue business districts. Chairman Persino mentioned that these residents should be more open to changes along commercial corridors because they willingly bought homes near those properties. Trustee Patel expressed his agreement, and inquired about buffer requirements for commercial districts as a way to reduce complaints. Chairman Persino replied by mentioning the difficulty of buffers because of the configuration of Lincoln Avenue and adjacent property lines.

Executive Director Boland then added that pedestrian-friendly developments have the potential to enhance, rather than reduce, nearby property values because of changing demographics and the desire of many to live in walkable communities. Chairman Persino agreed, and added that vacant properties are more likely to reduce property values due to their unattractiveness. He then moved on to the issue of off-street parking, saying that it is much more attractive if located in the rear of a building, but he also cautioned that New Urbanist designs can go too far. Trustee Patel agreed, but mentioned that the build-to guidelines were emphasized by the Task Force, and that new developments with setbacks may cause other developers to want to ignore build-to standards. Further discussion ensued.

Director Clarke continued by discussing the 6770 Lincoln Avenue property. This site used to contain both Walgreens and a medical office building, but Walgreens since purchased the other property and redeveloped the entire site. He showcased the various elements of the new development, including the build-to line, masonry buffer wall, and a new monument sign. Further, he discussed how residents of the community praised the aesthetics of the site, particularly the tower located at the corner of the building nearest the street, as well as the masonry wall which completely separates residential and commercial uses.

The final property on Lincoln Avenue Director Clarke mentioned was 6734 Lincoln, the current site of Meatheads and formerly Silo Electronics. Like the other developments, this building was brought closer to the street, and Meatheads replaced the original parking layout and the landscaping of the site. He also mentioned that this was the first building that Meatheads constructed itself.

Director Clarke noted that in addition to these total redevelopment projects undertaken under the Lincoln Avenue Plan, other changes have occurred as well. He discussed the Lincolnwood Public Library and pointed out the reconfiguration of the parking lot, to include landscaping to screen the entire lot from the street. He also mention the progress made on landscaping roadway medians throughout the community.

Following the presentation, Trustee Patel discussed the difficulty in attracting developers to Lincolnwood, as well as finding tenants for existing strip centers and small shop spaces. He inquired about finding ways to promote the Village's willingness for development, and discussion ensued. Conversation then moved on to residential properties on Lincoln Avenue. Trustee Patel mentioned the recent Village Board decision to make residential and mixed-use properties subject to special use approval. Chairman Persino noted this change makes new development more difficult to achieve. Director Clarke noted that the Plan Commission recommended this change, indicating that they took the middle of the road between permitting and prohibiting residential uses.

Manager Wiberg inquired whether there were any recommendations in the report that were outdated, noting that 10 years had since passed. Vice Chairman Kucienski noted that the report did not have enough time to show its value, saying that all new economic development stopped during the 2008-11 Recession. Discussion then turned to the attractiveness of the community, with Commissioner Levine saying that a number of vacant properties may be a deterrent for new business. Chairman Persino then noted that the Shoppes at Lincoln Pointe development will dramatically improve the image of the community, particularly to other developers. Discussion ensued on the condition of that property.

4. Reports

A. Development Updates

The first update mentioned by Director Clarke was the expiration of the Touhy-Lawndale TIF District. Chairman Persino discussed two issues he has with the Lowe's development: the "pork chop" access point on Lawndale and the south driveway of Lowes onto Lawndale, which is not level and can cause damages to vehicles traveling through it. Disucsison ensued. Commissioner Levine then motioned to authorize TIF

funds to fix this driveway, as well as to remove the right-in, right-out “pork chop” on Lawndale just south of Touhy Avenue. Commissioner Stauch seconded the motion, and it was approved by voice vote 5-0, (Commissioner Kaniff was absent at this time in the meeting).

Other development updates reported on included the Plan Commission recommendation to approve the PUD amendment for the former Dominick’s site, and Binny’s application to move into the Lincolnwood Produce site. Trustee Patel then discussed eliminating the Sunday alcohol sales time restrictions in the Village, noting that both Chicago and Skokie have earlier sales times than Lincolnwood, at 11:00AM and 8:00AM respectively. Director Clarke continued and discussed other updates, such as the senior development at the Bell and Howell site and the mixed-use development at 6733-35 Lincoln Avenue.

Director Clarke then discussed the proposed Begyle Brewery, which is interested in moving into a portion of the Town Center warehouse building. Also moving into the Town Center Mall is 90 Miles North Cuban Café, due to open in the coming days. Finally, Director Clarke discussed School District #74’s plans to remodel its campus. Currently, he said, they are deciding between traditional zoning requirements and going forward as a PUD.

B. New Business Licenses

Commissioners viewed the list of new business licenses issued during the month of August 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 Commissioner Stauch, the meeting was adjourned by consensus at 9:37 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Caleb Miller
Community Development Intern