MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
PLAN COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 6, 2017 – 7:00 P.M.
LINCOLNWOOD VILLAGE HALL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
6900 NORTH LINCOLN AVENUE
LINCOLNWOOD, ILLINOIS 60712

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Chairman Mark Yohanna
Sue Auerbach
Steven Jakubowski
Adi Kohn
Henry Novoselsky
Anthony Pauletto
Don Sampen

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:
Steve McNellis, Community Development Director
Doug Hammel, Community Development Manager
Kathryn Kasprzyk, Community Development Coordinator

I. Call to Order
Chairman Yohanna noted a quorum of seven members and called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Minutes
Motion to approve the August 2, 2017 Plan Commission Minutes was made by Commissioner Novoselsky and seconded by Commissioner Pauletto.

Aye: Novoselsky, Pauletto, Auerbach, Jakubowski, Kohn, Sampen, and Yohanna
Nay: None
Motion Approved: 7-0

Chairman Yohanna made an announcement that public comment for the next agenda item will be limited to three minutes per person.
IV. Case #PC-04-17: 7250 North Cicero Avenue – Rezoning, Special Uses, and Variations for a New Hotel

Chaiman Yohanna announced Case #PC-04-17 for consideration and review of Zoning Relief for a new six-story Hyatt Place Hotel and off-street parking area, including a Rezoning from the O-1, Office Zoning District to the B-2 General Business Zoning District, three Special Uses, and ten Variations.

Development Director McNellis stated the Petitioner and property owner, DML Properties, is requesting zoning relief for a new six-story hotel. The property is currently in the O, Office District and is 1.48 acres in size with an existing office building footprint of 16,500-square feet. The proposed hotel footprint will be approximately 15,400-square feet. While the existing site has no stormwater detention, the proposed hotel will be required to meet MWRD detention requirements. The method of detention will be a large tank under the parking lot.

Building renderings, elevations, site plans, landscape plans, and photographs were presented for review and discussion as well as a material sample PowerPoint slides showing brick and stone banding and stucco colors. Parking will be around the entire building with no access from Cicero Avenue. Chase and Jarlath Avenues will have one entry point each. A brick wall will be installed along the rear of the property per Village requirements.

Development Director McNellis reviewed the Requested Actions.

1. Map Amendment

- A Map Amendment is required to rezone the property from the O-1, Office Zoning District to the B-2, General Business Zoning District.

2. Special Uses

- **Hotel Use in the B-2 Zoning District**
  A Special Use is required for a hotel use in the B-2, General Business District.

- **Front and Corner Side Yard Parking Setback**
  A Special Use is required for parking in a Front Yard Setback (Cicero Avenue) and Corner Side Yard Setback (Chase and Jarlath Avenues). Director McNellis noted the parking impact is no greater than the existing site, with a similar parking layout, with rows north and south of the building, but the hotel proposal also has parking in front of the building.

- **Residential Hours Adjacent to a Residential Property**
  A Special Use is required to allow a business within 150 feet of a residentially-zoned property to operate between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Director McNellis noted the hotel will have no banquet facilities or public restaurant/bar, so it’s likely business overnight will be limited to guest check in/check out.
3. Variations

- **Maximum Building Height Variation**
  The Zoning Code allows a maximum building height of 38 feet or three stories. The proposed hotel’s main roof line is 73-feet-tall, but a mechanical glass “fin” extension adds an additional 15 feet for an overall height of 88 feet. A sun study was presented to help determine impact of the building shadow on the surrounding houses during different times of the year.

- **Off-Street Parking Requirement Variation**
  The Zoning Code requires 112 parking spaces and 103 spaces are proposed to be provided.

- **Parking Lot Dimensions**
  The parking space/aisle dimensions are similar to the existing parking lot. The Petitioner is requesting a two- to three-foot drive aisle and stall depth reduction.

- **Perimeter Landscape Area Variation**
  A Variation is needed to allow less than the required off-street parking perimeter landscaping area along Jarlath, Cicero, and Chase Avenues. Instead of the required eight-foot parking perimeter landscaping, the proposed plan is to provide an eight foot parking perimeter landscaped area with four feet on site, and four feet in the right-of-way.

- **Interior Parking Lot Landscaping Variation**
  The Petitioner is requesting relief from planting islands at each end of a parking row.

- **Wall Sign Location and Height From Grade**
  The Petitioner is proposing to install a wall sign on the hotel’s west elevation which does not face a public street, and is therefore not permissible. Additionally, the Petitioner plans on installing a wall sign 65 feet from grade where 30 feet is the maximum height allowed.

- **Permitted Number of Monument Signs**
  The Petitioner is proposing four monument signs where one is the maximum allowed.

- **Monument Sign Setback Variation**
  The Petitioner is requesting relief from the ten-foot sign setback from any exterior property line.

- **Illuminated Freestanding Sign Setback Variation**
  The Petitioner is proposing to install illuminated freestanding signs 43 feet from a residential zoning district. The Zoning Code requires these signs to be not less than 75 feet from a residentially-zoned district.

Staff Recommended Conditions include the following:

- An agreement from the owner to maintain the hedgerow proposed to be partially installed in the Cicero, Chase, and Jarlath Avenue rights-of-way;
• Consider a dense row of Arborvitae evergreen trees along the property line to screen car headlights year-round from shining toward single-family homes, in the following locations: south side of Chase Avenue, west of the main vehicular driveway and the north side of Jarlath Avenue, east of the main vehicular driveway;

• All shrubs planted in the hedgerow along Cicero, Chase, and Jarlath Avenues must be a minimum 36-inches tall at the time of planting;

• Revise planting beds around small monument signs to add some low-growing evergreens to the currently-proposed landscape material to provide visual interest in the winter;

• Designate selected areas, approximately 50-feet long, on the north side of Chase Avenue and south side of Jarlath Avenues, across from the vehicular entry/exit to the site as “no street parking” to allow for truck turning movements entering and exiting the site;

• Revise internal site circulation signage to direct entering vehicles from Jarlath Avenue to the hotel lobby;

• Provide a “look-back” clause in any approval Ordinance requiring a left turn lane on northbound Cicero Avenue, at Chase Avenue, at the Village’s sole discretion, should the safety of the intersection be compromised by traffic related to the proposed hotel. The “look-back” clause would be one-year from the date the hotel opens (if the project is approved);

• Relocate the monument sign at the northwest corner of Cicero and Jarlath Avenues so that it meets the Code-required ten-foot setback from the Jarlath Avenue property line;

• Prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, a security plan for the building and property shall be submitted and approved by the Police Chief; and

• Prior to occupancy, install a Fire Department knox box at the entrance(s) chosen by the Fire Department.

Development Director McNellis presented photographs taken by resident George Daratzis. Staff received 19 letters of objection and no letters of support for this project. Development Director McNellis stated that, per the Village Attorney, all or none of the letters are to be read into the record. Several residents have asked that the letters be read into the record. Chairman Yohanna noted that many of the letters came from members of tonight’s audience. The Plan Commission agreed that none of the letters will be read and will hear testimony from the audience.

Chairman Yohanna swore in the Petitioner, Mark LoCascio of the Brieton Group. Mr. LoCascio presented the project team and their credentials. The Brieton Group is the approved management company for Marriott, Hyatt, and Hilton Hotels. Their company has been in the hotel management business for 28 years.

The proposed hotel will have a small 40-seat restaurant and a bar for hotel guests only. Room service is also available. Both restaurant and room service will end at 10:00 p.m.
photographs of the lobby, front desk, breakfast area, and seating area were shown. Also shown were elevation and landscape plans. There will be four meeting rooms totaling 1,900-square feet.

Site plan improvements were presented after meeting with neighbors about security, safety, parking, and traffic concerns. There was much discussion about non-guests using the facilities for weddings and banquets, etc.

Julie Younan, 4838 West Jarlath Avenue, expressed her concern regarding rezoning the property for this use and hours of operation. Negative impacts include the increase and intensity of use and height of the proposed building. Hardships standards have not been identified. There is not sufficient off-street parking. This development should be denied.

Carol Krikorian, 4854 West Sherwin Avenue, is opposed to this proposed hotel. Variations are being asked to put a business where it does not fit. This hotel goes against the Zoning Code hardship standards. The current business fits in the neighborhood. They already have Grossinger employees parking on their streets. This is a residential neighborhood, and a hotel should not be allowed.

Christiana Daratzis, 4820 West Chase Avenue, commented about the state of the property. Ms. Daratzis stated that she would be unable to park in front of her home with the spaces being proposed for trucks turning into the hotel. There should not be a 24-hour business in a residential area. There are better locations in town for this use.

Mary Pedersen, 4901 West Jarvis Avenue, Skokie, stated her main concern had to do with traffic. Ms. Pedersen said Grossinger employees park on Sherwin Avenue too. This proposed hotel also affects Skokie residents.

Lou Atsaves, 4829 West Sherwin Avenue, opposes the hotel. This use doesn’t fit on this property. A hotel does not belong in a residential area. Mr. Atsaves asked the Plan Commission to deny this application.

Effie Atsaves, 4829 West Sherwin Avenue, stated a two-story office building has minimal impact on their neighborhood. The Zoning should not be changed. There is a risk to safety due to service vehicles and guest parking. Liquor should not be served in a residential neighborhood. This is the wrong location for this type of business and she is strongly against this proposal.

Jeff Evans, 7030 North Kilpatrick Avenue, stated this would adversely impact the community. His professional opinion is there are too many variances requested and the Petitioner is asking for a total rewrite of the zoning for this area, which is not appropriate. This project’s only benefit to the community is tax dollars. There is no buffer between the hotel and nearby housing. His concerns include noise, infringing on privacy, lighting concerns, and traffic disruption.

Victor Weissberg, 4820 West Sherwin Avenue, had concerns about the flooding on Cicero Avenue. This has been a long-time problem. Traffic is already miserable. No hardships have been presented. Housing values will be destroyed. It doesn’t belong in this neighborhood.
Jim Appler, 4903 West Sherwin Avenue, Skokie, reiterated the Grossinger parking and traffic concerns.

Michael Dreirer, 7009 North Kilpatrick Avenue, stated, as a builder, he understands the construction concerns to the neighbors if this was built. He also has concerns regarding problems with drugs, crime, and prostitution associated with a hotel.

Sandy Troiani, 4824 West Chase Avenue, objects to the rezoning. Zoning requirement were put in place to protect residents. All the requested relief demonstrates that the property is not large enough for a project of this size. This project will negatively impact the neighborhood quality of life with excessive noise and garbage. The neighborhood had an expectation of living next to an office building, not a 24-hour hotel. She also has a concern with parking being eliminated in front of her house.

Scott Troiani, 4824 West Chase Avenue, stated his main concern is about security. There is no line of sight issues with a two-story office building, unlike a six-story hotel.

Stan Wilk, 4830 West Chase Avenue, stated this concept in this location is a poor fit and inquired where the snow will be placed on the property. Mr. Wilk also expressed concerns about property values.

Tom Kougioumas, 6511 North Central Park Avenue, stated he is opposed to this plan and does not know one resident approving this plan. There are only two residential streets that flow in and out of the hotel site and asked how delivery and semi-trailer trucks are going to navigate the site. This is a beautiful hotel, but it is in the wrong spot.

Georgia Talaganas, 3955 West Estes Avenue, agrees with the residents even though she doesn’t live in the area. She does not believe they presented hardships. This project is too big for this spot. Ms. Talaganas is definitely opposed to this project.

Suzanne Margolis, 4943 West Sherwin Avenue, Skokie, mentioned many concerns that were previously stated. Traffic is a real problem and the intersection of Cicero and Touhy Avenues is already too crowded.

Allison Baughnan, 4912 West Sherwin Avenue, Skokie, stated a six-story hotel in a residential neighborhood is absurd. This project is upsetting to her and her family and is going to make their neighborhood not a nice place to live.

George Daratzis, 4820 West Chase Avenue, stated his main concern is about his children and the impact on them. If the hotel is built, he will sell his house.

The discussion turned to the number of employees which Mr. LoCascio said would be a total of nineteen employees; eight or nine of which are housekeeping who work from 7:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Other daytime employees include the front desk, a cook, a houseman, two engineers, a
salesman, and a general manager. There are usually around 15 employees during the day, at night there is generally six until about 11:00 p.m., and three overnight employees. Development Director McNellis stated the parking spaces required by Code takes into account employee parking.

There was much discussion and concern about the meeting rooms being used for wedding receptions, thereby increasing parking and traffic concerns.

Commissioner Sampen stated the Petitioners’ hardships are self-imposed and they have not proven the hardship standards to grant their requested Variations or Special Uses. Commissioner Novoselsky stated the illuminated wall sign on the north side facing Chase Avenue is not required and an imposition to the neighbors to the north. The traffic plan needs to be redesigned so the residents on Jarlath and Chase Avenues are able to park in front of their homes. This is too substantial of a burden on the residents and the present plan is totally unacceptable. Trucks need ingress and egress without precluding residential parking. Chairman Yohanna agreed with Commissioner Novoselsky.

Michael Scavo of Sam Schwartz Transportation Consultants, replied that the parking plan and delivery schedules can be adjusted. The delivery trucks will unload on the property and not park in the street. With the consolidation of the access drives from six to two, there will be additional curb space which will increase the amount of on-street parking which could lead to a two- or three-space loss, not six. Mr. Scavo presented statistics that if the current office building was fully occupied, it would generate more traffic than the proposed hotel based on the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) industry national standards. Commissioner Jakubowski questioned the Traffic Engineer’s method of analysis.

Chairman Yohanna stated there are many other issues regarding this project besides traffic that will need more discussion.

Chairman Yohanna swore in the property owners, Minhaz and Akin Lakhani. Commissioner Jakubowski asked Mr. Minhaz Lakhani how many hotels has he built or managed, which was objected to by Chairman Yohanna due to relevance. Commissioner Jakubowski noted he was trying to determine if the Petitioner had any relevant hotel experience. Mr. Minhaz Lakhani was also asked how he came about the decision to buy the building in question. Mr. Minhaz Lakhani said he met with former Mayor Turry who he said supported his decision. Development Director McNellis stated, for the record, that this item was previously referred by the Committee of the Whole, which does not grant approval but simply authorizes the process to proceed. Development Director McNellis also noted it was his understanding that the property was purchased after the referral at the Committee of the Whole meeting. Mr. Minhaz Lakhani said there was no written approval; he just asked Mayor Turry’s opinion.

The line of questioning by Commissioner Jakubowski was objected to by Commissioner Sampen and Chairman Yohanna who believed it to be out of line and recommended a motion to continue
this matter. Chairman Yohanna apologized to Mr. Minhaz Lakhani for the line of questioning he was subjected to.

Chairman Yohanna asked if there was anyone else in the audience who would like to address the Plan Commission. Let the record state that no one came forward.

**Motion to recommend** continuing Case #PC-04-17 to the Monday, October 2, 2017 Plan Commission meeting was made by Commissioner Sampen and seconded by Commissioner Pauletto.

**Aye:** Sampen, Pauletto, Auerbach, Kohn, and Yohanna  
**Nay:** Jakubowski and Novoselsky  
**Motion Approved:** 5-2

Commissioner Jakubowski stated for the record that the property owner has no hotel experience, and this matter should not be continued.

**V. Case #PC-10-17: Zoning Code Text Amendment – Natural Screening on Residential Properties (Continued from August 2, 2017 and July 5, 2017)**

Chairman Yohanna announced Case #PC-10-17 for consideration of a Zoning Code Text Amendment to modify the permissibility and requirements for Natural Screening on residential properties and adjacent Natural Screening defined as a Special Fence due to its location on public rights-of-way and utility easements.

Development Director McNellis stated that further information is still being gathered by staff and requested Case #PC-10-17 be continued, without discussion.

**Motion to recommend** approval to continue Case #PC-10-17, without discussion, was made by Commission Sampen and seconded by Commissioner Pauletto.

**Aye:** Sampen, Pauletto, Auerbach, Jakubowski, Kohn, Novoselsky, and Yohanna  
**Nay:** None  
**Motion Approved:** 7-0

**VI. Other Business**

Chairman Yohanna asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to address the Plan Commission. Let the record state that no one came forward.

**VII. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Plan Commission is scheduled for Monday, October 2, 2017.
VIII. **Adjournment**

**Motion to adjourn** was made by Commissioner Novoselsky and seconded by Commissioner Auerbach. Meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Aye: Novoselsky, Auerbach, Jakubowski, Kohn, Paletto, Sampen, and Yohanna  
Nay: None  
Motion Approved: 7-0

Respectfully submitted,  

Kathryn M. Kasprzyk  
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Community Development Coordinator