

CITY OF OAK FOREST

PLANNING & ZONING MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

The Planning & Zoning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. with Chairman Stuewe taking Roll Call.

PRESENT: Chairman Jim Stuewe
Commissioner Mike Forbes
Commissioner Ken Keller
Commissioner Curt Kunz
Commissioner Rick Larson
Commissioner Glenn Runge
Commissioner Wayne Schroeder
Commissioner Chuck Wolf
Director Ed Cage
Staff Member Paul Ruane
City Attorney, Scott Uhler
Deputy Clerk, Nicole Tormey

ABSENT: Commissioner Michael Ziak

ZC# 23-002 15801 S. Lorel Avenue – Zoning Map Amendment: The applicant requests review and recommendation of approval of a zoning map amendment from C1 – Local Commercial District and C2 – General Service Commercial District to R6 – Multi-Family Residential District at 15801 S. Lorel Avenue.

Ed Cage gave a brief recap. The original application came to Planning and Zoning on December 7th. It was the recommendation to go to City Council on December 13th. Just recently, City Council referred it back to Planning and Zoning.

Mr. Ruane stated the applicant has the next steps and updates since the last City Council meeting. He has a presentation ready.

Hume An, Vice President at Lincoln Avenue Capital, presented a power-point presentation. Mr. An stated Lincoln Avenue Capital is a national developer of senior and work force housing. Mr. An explained the history of the company and ongoing projects. He elaborated on the process to date. In November, an application was submitted to rezone 15801 Lorel Avenue from three existing zoning designations C1, C2 and IB to R6 multi-family residential. That was for 5.22 acre site. The intent was to allow for a 40 unit multi-family building with 100 parking spaces. That application was taken up at P&Z on December 7th and was approved. On December 13th City Council considered it. Feedback was received at the City Council meeting that the development was taking up a lot of space. There was particular concern about access off 157th Street. City Council recommended a revised plan. The plan presented today incorporates the feedback from that meeting. After that meeting, looking at feedback received and consulting with city staff, it has been decided to abandon rezoning IB institutional part of the parcel to the north that touches 157th Street. Instead, the plan is to develop only on the 3.2 acres to the south, currently zone C1 and C2. This is a reduced plan. Initially, it was for 40 units. The new plan is for 34 units. In order to comply with the R6, 100 parking spaces is being proposed. After consulting with staff, we decided to pursue a parking variance, a 1.5 parking spaces per unit, and a small variance for building height. The plan is not to increase the

number of stories of the building, but to allow for 9' ceilings for each of the floors and have sufficient height to allow for screening of rooftop HVAC equipment.

Mr. An pointed out some material from packet. A visual was shown of the existing zoning and the proposed development site straddling C1 and C2. Looking at the future land use map of the comprehensive plan, the entirety of the site looking to rezone as R6 is the proposed future land use as multi-family. Given that the plan is no longer looking to rezone this institutional use to the north, the proposed plan is fully in compliance with what the future land use map suggests. The proposed plan is specifically looking at 34 units, combination of nine 1 bedrooms, eight 2 bedrooms and seventeen 3 bedrooms. The new construction, 3 story elevator building, 55 parking spaces, a 1 to 5 ratio, would require 51 but we are adding 4 spaces beyond that. It will have a very high level environmental sustainability. The proposed plan is pursuing net zero certification and all electric, so it has met all net carbon certifications. Mr. An presented a view of the updated exterior of the building. He stated in terms of community benefits, the proposed plan is in compliance with the future land use map. It would create 50 construction jobs and 2 permanent jobs, onsite manager as well as a building technician who would be on call 24/7. The community room would be available for certain civic activities. That concludes the presentation and Mr. An indicated he would take any questions.

Commissioner Wolf asked if the motion is for the parcel to be rezoned to R6 or stays commercial, right? If it resides as commercial, some type of PUD can come forward it does not have to be cemented or changed to a R6 code. Is that correct?

Attorney Uhler stated yes, PUD is available and most zoning districts have an overlay or a zoning tool. He could not recall if C2 has a particular PUD reference, but a PUD is generally available.

Commission Forbes briefly gave a background of the future land use map created in 2006. In 2006, this particular parcel was zoned multi-family and at the time it was rezoned to commercial thinking larger big box stores would want more land. In 2008, the zoning map was redone making this lot commercial hoping that we would get some big box commercial development. But we realized that may never happen, we made the future land use map back to residential just in case the big box stores never happen.

Mr. Ruane had no further comment.

Commissioner Wolf recalled the future land use map that has been there for about 15 years now. It should be looked at and it should always be looked at every 5 to 10 years. But we haven't. But I recall back at that time when we looked at the future, there was more that we were looking at as a development of that area. It was brought up as a possibility to have a mixed use where it was a senior living center with retail on the bottom that connected with the rest of the commercial and that is how I believe you got to that point here. It was not strictly residential. We were looking for something for seniors at the time. We looked at what we had on Cicero which was totally full. It was a way to keep residential and the ones who lived here and whatnot the opportunity to sell their homes that they maintained for all the years and are ready for something smaller and want to stay in the town. That was the thought process back then I believe.

Commissioner Keeler asked if there will be no exit on 157th Street at all?

Mr. An replied that is correct and it was removed in response to the comments we received. They are not going to develop it.

Commissioner Keeler asked nothing on the north end of the property?

Mr. An stated if they do, it would be storm water detention.

Commission Keeler confirmed nothing for cars to go through, no driveway? No bus stop there?

Mr. An replied correct. A bus stop would not be part of our development.

Chairman Stuewe asked if there is anyone in the audience who wanted to speak to the Commission.

Sheri Macewko, 15749 Lockwood, approach the podium. Ms. Macewko questioned whether the parcel on the north end that is zoned R6 will have to stay R6. She wanted to know if residents will be notified if they want to develop the property. The residents want to know where we stand for the future with that piece of the property. She asked if it could be rezoned to something else? Would any future plan have to come before the zoning board and we would be notified that there is a potential use of it going to be done?

Mr. Cage replied that any zoning change requires a public hearing. Any time you have a request for a zoning change, you get the sign, notice in the newspaper and the mailing to people within 250 feet.

Ms. Macewko asked if it is already zoned R6 to make sure that anything that was going to be done, we would again get some notice or be notified?

Mr. Cage followed back up, any property that is rezoned requires a public hearing like we are at today. If that is something that the city would entertain, if it is not an applicant, the city would have to have a public hearing and invite everyone to rezone the property. I do not have an answer for that part of the question. There would have to be an application made by the city, come here, this group would have to make a recommendation and then go to City Council. City Council would have to approve it to be rezoned back.

Mr. An asked a clarifying question. Are you talking about (points to a site) this site? This parcel, with the existing townhome?

Ms. Macewko stated there is nothing there right now it is vacant.

Mr. An replied that is not part of our site.

Ms. Macewko asked about the proposed parking lot.

Mr. An replied they are not doing that anymore.

Chairman Stuewe asked if the property R2 is going to be R6, is that what you are looking to do? Or is it going to stay R2?

Mr. An reported this R6 is currently occupied by a townhome development. The IB zoning classification would remain on this part. And the most we would develop it would be to put storm water intervention.

Chairman Stuewe asked if anyone else would like to speak to the Commission. Hearing none. Is there a motion to approve?

Commission Wolf has comments. As far as word is today and as a commercial use, you can look at the future all you want, but that portion where the dialysis center is currently on was part of the future when we were talking the future map in 2008 I believe that was multi-family use as well. It was zoned properly at C2 when that went in so the reliance on the future and looking at what can come in...you got a Culvers coming in and I would say that being commercial and what the developments have been, even over the last ten years as mentioned this is one of the few areas where commercial has developed. And I continue to

believe that is the best case. Now whatever happened as far as this lot and the ownership of this, has been there since 73, I can't say. But looking at what fits and does not fit, to me make that request right now not taking in any development into consideration, I am looking at what it is zoned and what the proposal is, that it remains a commercial corridor. And if you look at the future, you don't know what it holds. But it is a difficult thing without more study to make that determination that this use is good for residential we are never going to have anything else. I feel our energies should be focused on that commercial corridor. We do not have deep lots left. If you look at Cicero how it is zoned or we changed C3 to accommodate a multi-use where it could be residential, it could be, but that development would come to planning and Zoning and City Council as well. We changed that. We took the steps to do it. And we need to take more steps here before we just give up on it. I do not think it is the best use. I think commercial needs those types of lots to continue the development we have trended. I mean there is other things the city needs to look at before making a decision. When you look at one point the LA Fitness Center that was going to be over within that area. I think some of these developments were delayed or they were taken off mainly and not developed due to the fact that a big portion of that is contaminated soil that we need to address. And we need to focus on our commercial corridors.

Commissioner Larson disagrees with Commissioner Wolf about needing more commercial. With all the spaces that are open down Cicero Avenue, all the closed buildings, the ones that have been torn down, the ones like Ace Hardware and the complex just north of 151st and Cicero. There are open opportunities, land, 159th where the trailer court used to be. There is a big access of property there for a big box commercial.

Commissioner Wolf stated not as big as we have here. I understand some of the storefronts that you are talking about but they don't have the depth either. So, I understand the focus is to bring 70 units that is being developed at 157th Street and Cicero. So we do have those types of developments that are occurring and we have those apartments and everything if you go down our whole corridor from Jewel all the way to Ridgeland, we have got apartments. I do not know as far as the access again, but I think the focus should be to keep people shopping within Oak Forest. Focus on commercial development and not just parcel it away with the phrase that something is better than nothing when looking at an empty lot. Well sometimes, nothing can be better than something when you are looking to the future of what we want to do. I think as a body here, we have that responsibility to continue to update and upgrade and look at what we anticipate as the future of Oak Forest. I do not see this as part of the future right now.

Commissioner Larson asked didn't we just say that parcel has been vacant for the last 16 years and the inside of having something going in there. 16 years later, there is still nothing in there. No one has come forward to do anything have they? Or did it just go up for sale within the last few months?

Commissioner Wolf stated he does not know. That is a good point. I don't own the property. So I don't know what has been looked at. If you look at what we have developed here and keep it within a commercial corridor with the commercial that has been developed and seems to be continuing to develop. Culvers as one example, but if you got this dialysis center, maybe something that fits within the medical realm where it is an out-care facility or something that fits with the dialysis center. But it can be where it does not really need that front of 159th Street to let people know or be aware that a restaurant is here or something like that. I do not think a restaurant will ever go on the property in the back. But a medical type focus could be a use or there is other uses that I believe will develop and bring more income in then the development by bringing it in to R6 that we have not even ventured and looked at.

Chairman Stuewe asked how long the property on Cicero has been sitting for? Where the lumber yard use to be. They were going to put those two buildings in for living space and businesses on the first floor. It has been 3 to 4 years and no one has gone to purchase that property yet.

Commissioner Wolf asked if that was the space where the marina was?

Chairman Stuewe answered yes.

Commissioner Wolf stated there was a development that was presented. It did not die out because we denied it. Does that mean we give up and just put apartment buildings?

Chairman Stuewe said he did not say put apartment buildings in there. I am saying the opportunity to put a business there has been there. The same with the other property, where the trailer park is, they are all visible.

Commissioner Larson had a question for Mr. An. The IB strip that you are not looking to do anything with now, it is closed off, you are not going to go on 157th but all the way down to the R6, was that were the 45 parking spots were before? That you are canceling out?

Mr. An stated it was a larger building, more than 45 parking spaces there.

Commissioner Larson stated it seemed like it was an awful lot there. The neighborhood was concerned about that. So that has nothing to do with the units or the parking that you are going to be using.

Mr. An stated they wanted to be responsive to the neighbors and not develop or rezone. The most they would do is storm water detention.

Commissioner Larson asked where are the 45 parking spots with the unit being right there?

Mr. An remarked they are pursuing a parking variance. The building shrunk and we are seeking less parking per unit. We wanted to do that initially because we think that is sufficient.

Commissioner Wolf appreciates the question but thinks the motion was whether we are going to do this to R6. It seems like we are getting into a development cart before the horse. We do not really know what this development is. We have an idea. But now even with this portion coming back here, we are looking at a different site where it is going to be. We are looking for variances on a site. If you want to take that town row of homes that is currently is R6 over there, nice homes, but I guess we did not take much consideration to the parking requirements in there. Did you ever try to get in and out there were the cars are parallel parked in front of the houses. There are 8 garages in the back and there are only about 6 parking spots in the rear that are taken as well. That is when you get the overflow on the street any time those people have a party. Because they cannot even fit in the complex. So we put restrictions on what is required with our parking at 2.5 for a reason and now we are going to revise this down to 1.5. I think the math was seventeen 3 bedroom units? Can you confirm that?

Mr. An confirmed.

Commissioner Wolf stated and you are going to have 1.5 cars? I mean if you went up to that code and just said 2.5 per unit on 3 bedrooms, you are basically saying by the time it comes down to the 1 or 2 bedroom apartments, if you 17 out and you are looking at 34, that is 17 units that have 20 parking spots. I am not here to really look at the development of this as much as I am to see if it is beneficial to have this recoded or reclassified as R6 versus the zoning that it is today. There are too many unknowns by putting this directly into R6 right now when it could come under a planned unit development to see if it fits. And it does not fit right now. We are already talking about variances.

Chairman Stuewe asked for any other comments from the Commissioners. Anyone else in the place would like to come up and talk to us?

Dawn Luciano, 15748 Lockwood, lives within 250 feet of the area that we are all talking about. A concern that I have that was brought up and many of us have is the parking and what is going to happen as residents have people over, where are they going to park and the kids. How is the school bus going to get into that area to pick kids up to bring them to school? I am glad that they are talking about moving the parking lot so it is not coming into 157th, but even still it is a little unclear how that parking is going to fit and all the cars are going to get in and out. Again if most people have more than 1 car in the household, especially if you have a 3 bedroom unit, where are they going to park? And of course like I said, the kids. How are they going to get to school?

Chairman Stuewe asked if there is anyone else. If not, do we have a motion for zoning case 23-002 15801 S. Lorel Avenue – Zoning map Amendment. The applicant requests review and recommendation of approval of a zoning map amendment from C1 – Local Commercial District and C2 – General Service Commercial District to R6 – Multi-Family Residential District at 15801. Is there a motion?

Commissioner Forbes made the motion. Commissioner Schroeder seconded.

AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Mr. Forbes			
	Mr. Keller		
	Mr. Kunz		
Mr. Larson			
	Mr. Runge		
Mr. Schroeder			
	Mr. Wolf		
			Mr. Ziak
	Chairman Stuewe		

5/3, it does not pass.

Attorney Uhler made a recommendation as a clean up matter. We have two petitions, one for the zoning variation and one for the parking and height. That should just fall because you did not rezone this but I would recommend you take formal action on the other matter as well. I assume it will be a motion to deny based on your prior action.

Chairman Stuewe, zoning case number 23-003 15801 S. Lorel Avenue – Parking & Height Variation. The applicant requests review and recommendation of approval of a variation request to allow the reduction of parking spaces requirements and a height variation at 15801. Is there a motion?

Commissioner Wolf made the motion to deny. Commissioner Forbes seconded.

Attorney Uhler stated it is a motion to deny the petition for a parking and height variation at this property.

Rollcall taken:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Mr. Forbes			
Mr. Keller			
Mr. Kunz			
Mr. Larson			
Mr. Runge			
Mr. Schroeder			
Mr. Wolf			
			Mr. Ziak
Chairman Stuewe			

Both fail.

Mr. Ruane wanted to confirm a date for this to move to City Council for a final determination.

Mr. Cage replied that he wants to talk to the City Administrator and update him as to what happened this evening. We will find what that date is.

Mr. Ruane confirmed it will be on the agenda whether it is the next City Council Agenda, if not the one at the end of this month.

Mr. Cage stated it will be in February. It is just a question of what we have up.

Mr. Ruane stated the 14th or the 28th.

Chairman Stuewe asked for a motion to approve the minutes of January 4, 2023.

Commissioner Forbes made the motion, Commissioner Schroeder seconded.

Chairman Stuewe asked all in favor?

All present said aye.

Attorney Uhler informed Chairman to ask for public comment on matters generally before this Commission.

Chairman Stuewe asked if there is anyone who wants to talk to the Commission.

Hank Kuspa approached the podium. He wanted to say thank you. I know we have several new members, I appreciate all the thought and consideration you put into this. I just want to say thank you very much for all you do for the community. Again you are the recommending body to the Council. The Council has the final decision but your input is very valuable. I want to thank each and every one of you for your service to Oak Forest.

Chairman Stuewe asked if anyone else wants to come up. Nobody. Is there a motion to adjourn?

Commissioner Forbes made the motion, Commissioner Larson seconded. All in favor?

All present said aye. Meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.


 CHAIRMAN JAMES STUEWE