



**MEETING MINUTES**

**PLAN COMMISSION**

Wednesday, February 26, 2014  
7:00 P.M.

Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Council Chambers

Members Present: Scott Peters (Chair), Terri Dubin, Jim Ford, Seth Freeman, Lenny Asaro, Colby Lewis, Richard Shure, Kwesi Steele,

Members Absent: none

Associate Members Present: Stuart Opdycke,

Associate Members Absent: David Galloway

Staff Present: Damir Latinovic, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner  
Melissa Klotz, Interim Zoning Administrator  
Mario Treto, Assistant City Attorney

Presiding Member: Scott Peters, Chairman

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**1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Chairman Peters called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M and explained the general meeting procedure, schedule, agenda items, time limits on public testimony and opportunities for cross examination of witnesses. Chairman Peters concluded the opening statement by saying that the Plan Commission forwards a recommendation to the City Council which makes the final determination on any matters discussed by the Plan Commission.

**2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS– CONTINUED FROM FEBRUARY 12, 2014 MEETING:**

**A. PLANED DEVELOPMENT  
835 Chicago Avenue**

**13PLND-0114**

John O'Donnell of O'Donnell Investment Co., developer of the proposed project, applies for a Special Use for a Planned Development in the C1a Commercial Mixed Use District (Zoning Code Section 6-10-3-3) to construct a 9-story, 97' tall mixed-use commercial, office, and residential tower. The proposed tower consists of 112 dwelling units, approximately 15,670 gross square feet of office space, approximately 12,064 gross square feet of commercial retail space, and 104 enclosed parking spaces. The applicant seeks Site Development Allowances for the number of dwelling units per lot size, floor area ratio (FAR), building height,

enclosed parking setback, number of parking spaces, and the number and length of loading berths. The Plan Commission makes a recommendation to City Council, the final determining body for this proposal.

Melissa Klotz, Interim Zoning Administrator, provided the brief overview of the revised plans and documents submitted by the petitioner. She said the petitioner has revised the number of parking spaces on the property to a total of 127 parking spaces. Of those 127 spaces, 106 spaces meet the dimensions and access requirements per the Zoning Ordinance, six are provided as tandem spaces and 15 spaces are provided on individual lifts. She noted two items were provided to the Commission members on the dais: 1. An email letter from associate member David Galloway, who is not able to attend tonight's meeting, and 2. The comparison assessment of three similar developments in Evanston with the proposed development. Ms. Klotz concluded by saying no other changes to the plans are proposed. Staff recommends approval of the proposed planned development at 835 Chicago Avenue.

Chairman Peters swore in all individuals that will be providing testimony during tonight's meeting.

Patrick Thompson, the attorney for the developer, introduced the developer's team and summarized the questions for the developer that were brought up by the public and the Commission at the last hearing. He clarified that there is an existing right-turn lane on southbound Chicago Avenue and that will remain. A new right-turn dedicated lane on northbound Chicago Avenue is being proposed. He invited Donald Copper, the architect of the project to summarize the architecture of the building.

Donald Copper, principal GREC architects, explained the base of the building along Chicago Avenue and Main St. would include a marble stone base and a glazed brick cladding (terra cotta) above it. He also provided an updated rendering looking southeast on the proposed building and elevations that include adjacent buildings. Mr. Copper reminded everyone that Design Evanston organization supports the proposed project.

Mr. Copper further explained that the addition of a second level of parking underground is not possible because of the high water level. Adding a second level of parking above grade would have to include an access ramp off of Chicago Avenue which is not consistent with the City's goals and would add height to the building. As such the solution they are presenting is adding 6 tandem parking spaces on the lower parking level and also adding 15 parking spaces on individual lifts along the west property line on the lower parking level. As such, the total number of parking spaces on site is now 127.

Mr. Thompson invited Scott Bernstein to speak. Scott Bernstein, president and founder of the non-profit organization Center for Neighborhood Technology which specializes in TOD developments and car sharing research who is also a resident of Evanston and lives at 917 Elmwood St. He submitted a written statement of his testimony. Mr. Bernstein stated that he was also the owner of I-GO car sharing program which in 2013 was purchased by Enterprise Rent-a Car. He stated he is not employed by the developer. He is here simply providing findings of their research. Mr.

Bernstein provided the Census data for car-ownership within a ¼ mile and ½ mile radius of the Chicago Main St. Station. They looked at average car ownership per household, car ownership for owner occupied units and that of rental units. They also looked at this data for all stops on the Purple line.

For the region, Mr. Bernstein stated the average is 1.6 vehicles per occupied dwelling unit. Within ½ mile radius of the station the average is 1.28 vehicles per household and within ¼ mile radius that drops to 1.17 vehicles per household. He stated that the numbers for just the rental units are lower. There are 861 renters within ¼ mile and 25% have no cars at all. Within ¼ mile renters have 0.93 vehicles per household. He stated that the vehicles per rental unit are comparable between Foster, Dempster and Main Street stations. Mr. Bernstein also stated that between 2000- 2009 the percentage of commuters who did not drive increased by 3%.

Mr. Bernstein stated that the trend of development across the country for TOD developments is to provide very limited number of on-site parking. He provided an example of the recent development near Division St and Ashland Ave (1611 W. Division St) in Chicago that has no on-site parking except for shared parking by I-GO cars.

He proceeded to summarize benefits of providing shared parking solutions for TOD developments. Not all parking spaces for any use are 100% occupied at all times. So there is an opportunity to share for uses that have peak demands at off times. He encouraged everyone to visit the website [www.rightsizeparking.com](http://www.rightsizeparking.com). He further pointed out that many communities in Chicago area reduce parking requirement for developments near transit stops.

Mr. Bernstein went over the membership numbers for car-sharing programs such as I-Go and Zip-cars. He summarized by saying based on his research the development at the subject site should have approximately 0.8 parking spaces per dwelling unit and one parking space per two employees for nonresidential uses. He believes the proposal is actually on the high end for parking.

Upon a question from Commissioner Freeman, Mr. Bernstein stated that the count of 0-1 parking spaces per household is based on the question from the Census data collection. He stated he can provide the raw data to staff the next day. He explained the trend is that the number of cars per household and the number of vehicle miles travelled per household is going down.

Commissioner Shure pointed out that the trends are either short term or long term. He agrees that long term the car ownership will come down but he has concern about short term demand for parking on this site. Mr. Bernstein explained a number of different elements will influence the demand for short term and long term parking on the site. He encouraged the city to better manage any parking that is available in the area.

Upon a question from Commissioner Opdycke regarding the waiting list for parking at the adjacent property, Mr. Bernstein suggested to monitor all on-site parking spaces to get a better number of how many of them are used and at what times. Not all

parking spaces are used at all times. It is expensive to provide parking for everyone that might need it at the same time. On average one space in a parking garage costs \$50,000 to construct. That is one of the reasons why housing is becoming less affordable.

Commissioner Freeman asked how the tandem and lift parking spaces will be managed. Mr. Bernstein stated residents must be encouraged to share parking spaces. Based on their research every shared parking space takes out 15-16 required parking spaces.

Mr. Thompson introduced the next speaker Richard Aaronson of Atlantic Realty Partners. Mr. Aaronson explained his company developed "The Reserve" and 1717 Ridge" developments in Evanston. He believes they have a very good knowledge of parking demands in this area and provided an overview of parking ratios for recently approved multifamily projects in Evanston.

Mr. Aaronson went over the parking demand based on the type of the renter. He stated that they do see 10-15% of households have more than one vehicle which is well suited for tandem spaces or the lift spaces. They will promote bike ownership, use of transit and shared parking. The system will be based on assigned parking. An alternative is permit parking where you sell more parking permits than there are spaces because not all spaces are occupied at all times. That would increase the parking availability if they need to.

In regard to shared parking, office and residential uses have a perfect shared parking scenario because of the demand at opposite times of the day. They anticipate at least 50% of residential parking users will use their car for work. 30-40 spaces would be vacated during the day. There will also be management on site to resolve any issues that may come up. The property will be well staffed on both weekends and evenings during the week.

Mr. Aaronson stated they will have 13 spaces on the ground floor dedicated to retail tenants. Additionally, on the ground floor there would be 2 car sharing spaces and spaces available for residents which will likely be vacant during the day and available for retail users. He further said they fully believe they will be adequately parked from day one. It is important to them as a developer that their product works from day one. They do not want to grow into it.

Mr. John O'Donnell, the applicant, provided concluding remarks for the petitioner's team. He believes the team provided the best possible solutions based on the Commission's and public remarks. They will encourage transit use and lower car ownership by providing Ventra transit cards, possible free car-sharing membership to their tenants, and other solutions.

Chairman Peters asked if the applicant is okay if the promises made during their testimony are included in the PD Ordinance, to which Mr. O'Donnell stated he does not object to that.

Commissioner Freeman asked what is the average ownership of bikes per household, to which Mr. Aaronson stated that approximately 50% of units have bicycles. Mr. Aaronson stated they have the ability to increase the spaces devoted to bike parking even though many residents like to keep their bicycles in their units. Upon a question Mr. O'Donnell stated it comes down to shared parking.

Mr. Asaro confirmed with staff the parking ratios for the E2 and Central Street projects as presented in the supplemental information from staff. He pointed out this project is proposing different strategies on how to best utilize their parking spaces, including those that will be vacant at certain times.

Upon a question from Commissioner Freeman, Mr. Klotz confirmed the Code required parking spaces provide a ratio of 0.95 parking spaces per dwelling unit.

Upon a question from Commissioner Opdycke, Mr. Thompson confirmed there would be 13 parking spaces for retail uses on the first floor while office uses will be utilizing the parking spaces on the lower level through a shared parking arrangement. Mr. Aaronson stated they have in the past successfully implemented multiple households to use tandem spaces. Commissioner Opdycke stated his concern is what does not fit into this building will spill onto the streets.

Commissioner Freeman stated he is concerned that 13 spaces will only be dedicated to retail spaces but the ratio of remaining parking spaces for the residential units is still over 1.0. He stated he is concerned this project could add to the parking problem in the neighborhood. Mr. O'Donnell stated that I-GO car sharing program could reduce 15-17 cars in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Ford stated he believes not all retail customers will park on site. Some of them will add to the parking congestion in the neighborhood. Upon a question, Mr. Aaronson said they will manage shared parking between retail and residential users through signage or other means, such as moveable cones, or allowing them during certain times of the day only. They will manage it based on the demand and the rate of utilization.

Upon a question from Commissioner Steele, Mr. Aaronson confirmed they are familiar that there are parking difficulties during peak times in the neighborhood. He believes they will be able to accommodate their users and will not contribute the area parking problems.

Mr. Bernstein provided an example from California where cities and retail and neighborhood business organizations in certain areas of those cities have joined to share all parking available and share all parking revenue. Something like this could be started here. The area is starting to feel like a town center which is a good thing.

Chairman Peters stated this could be an interesting solution that City staff and Aldermen may want to pursue with help of Mr. Bernstein who lives in the area.

Commissioner Steele stated his concern is what is the City getting since the City is giving \$3mil. towards this development and allows a 30-foot height increase.

At this time the Commission took a 10 minute break at 9:05 pm.

Chairman Peters said during the break he was approached by a member of the audience who would still like to speak.

Richard Kosmacher, 4518 N Whipple, with Enterprise car share that acquired I-GO car sharing, stated this is the type of project where they would like to put car sharing spaces. He believes 15-20 private cars are removed from the streets for every car sharing space.

Chairman Peters opened the hearing to public comment and questions for the applicant.

Niki Hiltwein, 820 Hinman Ave, asked for clarification on the amount of shared spaces and how the data was collected that was cited by Mr. Bernstein. Mr. Aaronson answered that there are no more cars than there are parking spaces in the developments they studied and Mr. Bernstein provided explanation regarding Census data collection, sampling and Census Blocks.

Mr. Heekyung Sung, 1121 Church St. asked for the unit size to which Mr. Copper answered the studios would be 500-600 sq. ft., one bedrooms 750-850 sq. ft., two bedrooms 1,050-1,114 sq. ft. and one three bedroom unit that would be 1,200 sq. ft.

Mr. Sung asked for the setback from Chicago Avenue, to which Mr. Copper said on the ground level there would be a 4 ft. setback, while the upper floor balconies encroach onto the ROW by four feet. The setback from the south property line is 20-24 ft. for the residential tower. The setback on the north property line is 8-10 feet for the residential tower and the ground floor is at the property line. On the east side, there is a ten foot setback along the portion of the property adjacent to the residentially zoned properties. Upon a question, Mr. Copper said there is no setback at the northeast corner of the building and the alley is 20 feet wide. Upon a question, Mr. Copper said he is not familiar with the widths of Main St. and Chicago Ave.

Mr. Richard Taiwo, 515 Main St. asked what the City and the residents are getting back from the development. Mr. Thompson stated they are in the process of negotiating public benefits with City staff. They will make financial contribution towards the park, and for the loss of parking spaces as well as other contributions that are still being negotiated. He pointed out that this project will generate a significant amount of increment into the TIF that could be used to address parking issues in the neighborhood. Mr. O'Donnell stated he has owned the property for almost 4 years and has worked hard with staff to develop the property.

Ms. Catherine Juric, 515 Main St, asked about the 7 different development allowances. Ms. Klotz explained the development allowances sought for both the number of loading docks and the length of the loading docks.

Mr. Sung, 1121 Church St, asked about the location of trash enclosures. Mr. Copper explained there will be a location for the dumpster and recycling collection. The building will achieve LEED Silver status.

Chairman Peters asked for members of the public to speak who wish to provide general statements.

Mr. William Cannon, 515 Main St., the manager of the property, provided letters and pictures of the area to the Board. He pointed to the loading trucks blocking the alley adjacent to the site and identified where each picture was taken trying to show the amount of traffic. He believes there is a lot of hopeful thinking and a lot of speculation about the project. The request for additional height and additional units is the problem. Mr. Cannon believes his property owners on top floors looking south will lose part of their property value due to the loss of the views.

Commissioner Freeman pointed to the fact that using the alley for major access to the site is problematic. Mr. Cannon stated different trucks block the alley at different times of the day.

Mr. Thompson asked if Mr. Cannon can prove that he was at the site taking photos every day, to which Mr. Cannon stated he does not but he invites everyone to visit the site and experience it for themselves.

Commissioner Asaro asked about the sale prices of the units in his building since the building at 900 Chicago Ave was constructed. Mr. Cannon stated that he does not have that information.

Mr. Jim Ludwig, 515 Main St. said he owns two units at 515 Main St. He believes there is little evidence to support granting the request they are seeking. The building does not have to be as tall as they are proposing and must provide parking for all businesses and all residential units.

Commissioner Steele asked how many parking spaces he leases with the two rental units. Mr. Ludwig said he has one parking space with each unit but there are 3 people with 3 cars total. The one excess car is probably parked in a space from other tenants in the building or they have received a spot in the city-owned parking lot nearby.

Mr. Jack Weiss, president of Design Evanston and a member of the Preservation Commission stated that this property did not have any onsite parking in the past. He confirmed the position from Design Evanston is that this is a perfect location for a TOD development. He reminded the Commission there are only two communities in the region that have this kind of opportunity: Evanston and Oak Park. This is a unique opportunity and deserves to be well thought out. Upon a question from Commissioner Freeman, Mr. Weiss believes young people will be moving in the area and they are renting and they own fewer cars. The demographic will change this property.

Ms. Catherine Juric, 515 Main St, stated that is unrealistic that a parking space can be shared between a residential unit and a retail space. The developer is asking too much from the City to enable them to have fewer parking spaces.

Mr. Carl Bova, 1322 Rosalie St. stated this has too many significant allowances. Cutting the height to six stories will eliminate many parking concerns. He believes there are very few people in Evanston who have no cars. The whole notion of lifts and tandem spaces supports the idea of more than 1 car per unit not less than 1. TOD means nothing in ridership numbers. He asked who will be maintaining and inspecting the lift spaces. Evanston as a whole has a 1.5 car ratio per household. The ratio proposed is embarrassing. His 2008 data says that 66% of people had one or two cars. There is no spillover capacity in this area. This development is dreadfully inadequate when compared to surrounding buildings.

Mr. Gus Friedlander, 852 Hinman Ave, sees the traffic congestion in the area every day. There are deliveries of all kinds in the alley during all times of the day. There is also illegal parking in the alley by people who cannot find on-street parking. He believes there will be at least 1.5 cars per unit here. These are not small units. They may not use them every day but they will have cars.

Mr. Richard Taiwo, 515 Main St., said he believes the Commission is here to serve the residents. Similar to doctors your task is to do no harm. If you approve this development you are engaging in malpractice.

Mr. Sung, 1121 Church St. asked if he can show some slides. He stated he did his own research of the area. He measured the site and the streets himself. Using Kedzie St. as the exit down the alley is too far from the site. He showed the design characteristics of TOD developments from the CMAP website, such as high quality walking environment. The development is not providing for additional setback from Main Street. The development does not show consideration towards the neighborhood. Upon a question from Chairman Peters about the origins of TOD developments and what makes a good walking environment, Mr. Sung said he is not familiar with that.

Niki Hiltwein, 820 Hinman Ave said she believes that notice requirements should apply to continued hearings. She believes many people who take transit to work also own cars. The city's parking lots are also full and the waiting lists are 6 months – 2 years long. Ms. Hiltwein believes there is a severe parking shortage in the area. She proceeded to show photographs and slides of parking issues in the neighborhood and issues with trucks and garbage dumpsters blocking the north-south alley adjacent to the property. Ms. Hiltwein said anything new that comes in should be able to provide adequate parking on their property. She also stated she thinks the northeast corner of the building should not be allowed to be up against the property line.

With no further comments from the public Chairman Peters invited the applicant to provide a closing statement.



Mr. Thompson thanked the Commission and the public for their input. He understands the concerns. He also invited the Commission to focus on the facts they provided. The traffic study was provided; the traffic increase would not be significant to the area roadways. They provided shared parking scenarios that will work, based on experience, and the project is consistent with other Evanston area developments that were approved. The project provides cutting edge solutions to parking concern for a TOD development. The project meets the standards of approval. The project will attract the demographic that wants to move to Evanston and will use the transit. The project will generate a lot of increment to the TIF which can be used to address parking concerns in the area.

Commissioner Asaro stated he does not think there is any additional information that is needed and there is no information void. Commissioner Freeman agreed.

Commissioner Asaro suggested for each Commissioner to make statements and present their opinion and then to take a vote.

Commissioner Opdycke confirmed the Plan Commission is a recommending body and the City Council will make the final decision if the standards are met or no and to approve the project or not. He said he is glad he does not have a vote as an associate member on this case because it is very tough. The parking issues do need to be made clear to the Council.

Commissioner Freeman stated he is in favor of a development on this property but not the proposed development. There are too many issues, too many development allowances, the building is too high, and there are too many parking issues. If the height is reduced, the parking could be solved. The number of parking spaces per bedroom is 0.68 and he thinks that is not adequate. He is not in favor of this project.

Upon a question from Commissioner Freeman, Mr. Mario Treto, Assistant City Attorney, confirmed this is a continued public hearing and it did not need a re-notice. The city completed all required public notice that it needed to.

Commissioner Ford said he agrees with Commissioner Freeman. The site does need to be developed but he thinks there will be parking problems and the concern about the dependence on the alley is a serious one. The project is much too dependent on everything working out perfectly.

Commissioner Shure said this is a tough one. It might be hard picturing anything working here, but that makes him think that we need to take a chance on this one. We need to focus on what is positive about this development.

Commissioner Freeman stated there is zoning in place and zoning mechanisms to figure out what can work here, what density is appropriate.

Commissioner Shure believes there is also a self-policing mechanism in place. Renters will not move here if they have a car, when there is no car parking available for them.

Commissioner Asaro stated he would recommend approval of this project. This is a product that is more of a risk for the developer. This is a market for someone that has 1 or no cars. They are the last ones in and are stuck with the burdens. If the developer is willing to make a bet that there is a market for his product, then Evanston is going to benefit from this. This is not atypical residential and mixed use location and product.

Commissioner Dubin stated that there is also a chance that the trends that are coming will impact existing developments too. It is not fair to punish this developer for wrongdoing over the last 20-30 years.

Commissioner Lewis agreed with Commissioner Asaro. He believes the market will be self-selective and self-correct itself. He pointed out that developer worked with staff to come up with a plan and he believes that the proposed access using the alley is the better one then having another curb cut on a busy thoroughfare where it would have conflict with pedestrians and significant amount of traffic. This is what the alleys are for. This is good planning design to use the alley. Commissioner Lewis stated he supports the project.

Commissioner Steele stated he thinks the developer is asking for a lot of development allowances. The developer has a right to develop but the parking issues are significant. Finding parking is a problem. There will be a negative impact on surrounding residents. Let's stick to the zoning and let the Council make the decision.

Chairman Peters stated he used to live in the area. He believes there are parking issues in the neighborhood but there are no traffic issues in the neighborhood. A single owner should not bear the burden to correct the problems for the whole area. He stated that his research on demographic numbers is the same as Mr. Bernstein's. He believes the projection trends are accurate. The site is ideal for TOD mixed use. The ridership on CTA and Metra needs to be increased and this project will help. The biggest problem with the project is using the alley for ingress and egress. Some work could still be done to improve that. Chairman Peters said he supports the plan because he thinks it will work, but there is need for conditions of approval.

Chairman Peters proceeded to read each standard for approval of planned developments and confirmed the project meets all standard albeit with disagreement from some members of the Commission.

There being no further discussion Commissioner Asaro made a motion to approve the proposed planned development as amended based on the revised plans and to incorporate the conditions based on the testimony:

Commissioner Shure seconded the motion.

Commissioners Asaro, Shure, Dubin, Lewis and Chairman Peters voted Aye.

Commissioners Freeman, Ford and Steele voted Nay.

The motion passed by vote 5:3

**3. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 12, 2014 MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Asaro.

A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved by voice call 8-0.

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Asaro motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Commissioner Shure seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Damir Latinovic  
Neighborhood and Land Use Planner  
Community Development Department