Chairman Gorman called the February 20, 2017 meeting of the Downers Grove Comprehensive Plan Ad Hoc Committee meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. and led the meeting with the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Gorman, Ms. Acks, Ms. Hogstrom, Ms. Majauskas, Mr. Wilkinson

**ABSENT:** Members Kalina and Luka

**STAFF:** Community Development Director Stan Popovich

**VISITORS:** John Houseal with Houseal Levigne Associates, 188 W. Randolph, Chicago; Amy Gassen, 5320 Benton, Downers Grove; Linda Kunze, 933 Curtiss, Downers Grove; Rich Kulovany, 6825 Camden Rd., Downers Grove; Don Rickard, 4735 Main St., Downers Grove; Graham Mosey, 4925 Forest Ave., Downers Grove; Steve Kuhn, 4925 Forest Ave., Downers Grove

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 16, 2017**

A typographical error was noted on page 5, second paragraph. On the same page, under Public Comment, fourth line, delete the word “fair” and insert “fare”. **MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 16, 2017 MEETING WERE APPROVED ON MOTION BY MR. WILKINSON, SECONDED BY MRS. ACKS. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 5-0.**

**REVIEW DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

Community Development Dir. Stan Popovich referenced a memo prepared for members, a copy of the functional sub-areas and some emails. He reviewed the latest updates to the plan. However, he pointed out that tonight’s meeting would focus on the development regulations and how they would impact the development throughout the downtown area and how each of the sub-areas would function in terms of setbacks and bulk requirements. Those changes, he clarified, would be made at the village council level.

Mr. John Houseal, with Houseal Associates, reviewed what changes were made between the boundaries and what changes could not be made, i.e., those between the three primary districts. Ms. Acks, referring to the northwest corner of Maple and Main, voiced concern that a six-story
building could be located there, creating a canyon. She further expressed her concern that the parking along the railroad tracks, north of Burlington, could be removed and replaced with six-story buildings and block out the downtown. She believed a cap in height should be required. Mr. Houssen explained that the ad hoc committee could reduce the height at the northwest corner of Maple and Main (up to Grove Street) if desired. Ms. Acks, along with others, preferred to expand the northwest corner of Main and Maple, as well as the two parcels along the tracks (east and west of Main Street) to become part of the Downtown Core.

Mr. Popovich reviewed the other changes that were made from the last meeting. The group also discussed cell towers in the downtown area.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Graham Mosey, 4925 Forest Ave., Downers Grove, referenced his emails as well as another neighbor’s email and shared his frustration that this committee was having its conversation and putting forth recommendations to council only to find out that the village council has made its decisions on district lines. Mr. Mosey stated his business has been in the village for forty years and the reason he purchased his business on Forest Avenue was because years ago the concept was to take off the load from the Downtown Central Business District and to bring it to secondary areas, such as Forest Avenue or Warren Avenue and to bring in service businesses, excluding retail, so that the downtown could have a vibrant retail area. He voiced frustration that council removed part of a footprint from Main Street at the corner of Maple and Main where parking existed and some very good opportunities existed for retail but instead residences were being constructed.

He said he was before this group because the footprint was being reduced, the real estate was being compromised with less services, less businesses and less opportunities for more multi-family high density to be developed in the downtown. Mr. Mosey summarized how Forest Avenue changed over the years and the variety of building types currently found on Forest Avenue. For the village to say that development could not increase in height was irresponsible and to make such changes on Forest Avenue would be economically impacted. He stated it was unfortunate that this committee did not have a say in such changes.

Mr. Mosey further explained he purchased his property with the knowledge that he could develop on Forest Avenue but that the proposed change hindered it and made it economically not feasible. He praised the downtown when a nearby business owner purchased three bankrupt properties with the idea that at some point all of the businesses could be doing a nice development on Forest Avenue. He was in the process of contacting other nearby property owners about this proposed change.

In response, Ms. Majauskas asked Mr. Mosey what he did want, wherein he stated he would not change anything on Forest Avenue. As an aside, he noted that prior to the changes being proposed, he and another property owner and tenant were discussing a proposed development with enclosed self parking for not only the building but “free range parking.” His development would have been a mixed-use building.

Ms. Linda Kunze, Downtown Development Corporation, reiterated what the above speaker had said and also liked the comments that were made in Mr. Hinkel’s letter to this committee – that some of the new Internet companies are hiring more employees because they want to be downtown and have
access to Chicago as well as access to nearby amenities in the village. She supported having more offices on Forest Avenue.

Mr. Mosey returned and explained that people will begin to ask what was the reason for the village council to make such a proposal and he stated his job was to get in front of council to find out what was the reason and to make council responsible for that reason. Of the remaining businesses on Forest Avenue, Mr. Mosey explained they were tired because they could not afford to redevelop individually. He honestly thought that Forest Avenue would not have been discussed or compromised they way it had been and believed Forest Avenue should have been left alone.

Mr. Rich Kulovany, 6825 Camden, understood that Mr. Mosey’s contention was tall buildings constructed on Forest Avenue as well as across the street and that the shorter buildings did not match the character of what already existed. Mr. Mosey returned and stated it did not match the character nor was it economical when considering the setbacks and the lower height because the ability for parking was being taken away—the taller the structure, the more ability there was to park internally. The lower buildings had no ability for parking. Mr. Mosey commented that the east side of Main Street could be compromised at some point as well, given that parking was an issue there.

Continuing, Mr. Mosey stated the downtown was slowly being “strangled” which made the transition area more important. However, now the transition area was being “strangled” especially on Forest Avenue. Asked if he needed 70 feet to make it feasible, Mr. Mosey indicated not necessarily so and proceeded to explain what his conversation was with staff from 20 years ago.

RECOMMENDATION OF DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Mr. Popovich summarized for those in attendance all of the committees and commissions the plan was reviewed by, including village council. Next steps were explained as well as the motions the committee should consider forwarding to the Village Council: 1) motion to review the northwest corner of Maple and Main Streets, running up to Grove Street— to bring the properties into the Downtown Core; 2) motion to review two properties on Main Street, north of Burlington, located on the east and west sides of Main; and 3) motion to review Franklin Street, 7 blocks south on the east side of Forest Avenue.

MOTION BY MR. WILKINSON TO RECOMMEND THE DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS REGARDLESS OF WHAT THE ZONING MAP LOOKS LIKE.

SECONDED BY MS. HOGSTROM.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 5-0.

MOTION BY MS. ACKS THAT THE PLAN COMMISSION REVIEW THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF MAPLE AND MAIN STREETS, UP TO GROVE STREET AND TO CONSIDER BRINGING THE PROPERTIES INTO THE DOWNTOWN CORE.

SECONDED BY MS. MAJAUSKAS.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 5-0.
Discussion then followed regarding the two parking lots located on the east and west sides of Main Street along the railroad tracks. Comments followed that the parcels should be an expansion of the Downtown Core area from Main to Washington. Other comments followed that the train station should be included in the Downtown Core also.

Discussing the west side of Main Street, consensus was to leave it as Downtown Edge 1.


SECONDED BY MS. MAJAUSKAS.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 4-1 (NAY: MR. GORMAN)

Asked what members thought about Forest Avenue (east side) up to Franklin Street and it being currently depicted as Downtown Transition, Mr. Wilkinson felt it should remain in character with what currently existed. On the Main Street side he noted the various businesses that were currently there and said they could be incorporated into the type of development Mr. Mosey discussed above, i.e., service organizations that could be anchored. The Franklin to Forest to Main area should be kept as is. The taller buildings can be constructed with the caveat that parking be created underneath the building.

Ms. Majauskas, however, pointed out that with the new condo building in the area now, the village began to make the area “big buildings”, other than the houses that were businesses, and so, to cut it off mid-block did not make sense. Further dialog followed.

MOTION BY MR. WILKINSON THAT THE PLAN COMMISSION CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER DOWNTOWN EDGE 2 ZONING FOR THE EAST SIDE OF FOREST AVENUE UP TO FRANKLIN.

SECONDED BY MS. ACKS.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 5-0.

Mr. Popovich reviewed the next steps the comprehensive plan would follow. He thanked all of the members for volunteering their time and effort on the village’s comprehensive plan.

ADJOURNMENT

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 8:14 P.M. ON MOTION BY MR. WILKINSON, SECONDED BY MS. MAJAUSKAS. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Celeste K. Weilandt
(As transcribed by MP-3 audio)