

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
PUBLIC HEARING

DECEMBER 5, 2016, 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Rickard called the December 5, 2016 meeting of the Downers Grove Plan Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Plan Commissioners and public in the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance. Staff announced that Mr. Cronin had submitted his letter of resignation.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Chairman Rickard, Mr. Boyle, Ms. Gassen, Ms. Hogstrom, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Maurer, Mr. Thoman

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Stan Popovich, Director of Community Development; and Rebecca Leitschuh, Senior Planner

VISITORS: Charlotte and Byron Holtzen, 5226 Carpenter Street, Downers Grove; Mary Ann Badke, 5408 Carpenter Street, Downers Grove; Rich Kulovany, 6825 Camden, Downers Grove; Cindy and Christina Zaeske, 1130 Forest, Downers Grove; Ed Olsen, 5138 Lee, Downers Grove; Bill Chaubery, 1132 Curtiss 1-A, Downers Grove

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

NOVEMBER 7, 2016 MINUTES – MOTION BY MR. THOMAN, SECONDED BY MS. HOGSTROM, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 7-0. MS. JOHNSON ABSTAINED.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Chairman Rickard explained the protocol for the public hearing and swore in those individuals that would be speaking on the petition below.

FILE 16-PLC-0019: A petition seeking review, comments and a positive recommendation to forward the Downers Grove Comprehensive Plan update to the Village Council. Should Council adopt the update, it will become the official plan for the Village as required by Section 1.12 of the Municipal Code. Village of Downers Grove, Petitioner.

Director of Community Development, Mr. Popovich, on behalf of the Village, summarized the significant updates to the Plan, as referenced in the table included in the Staff Memo dated December 5, 2016. Mr. Popovich introduced the changes by explaining the history of the Comprehensive Plan: The original 1965 Comprehensive Plan; a new, award-winning plan was adopted in 2011 based on significant community outreach in Total Community Development III; a

minor revision made in 2015. This too is an update, not a total re-writing. Five years is standard planning practice to update a comprehensive plan.

Mr. Popovich explained that Staff uses the plan on a daily basis, and that it is aspirational/visionary in nature to serve as a roadmap looking 15-20 years in the future. He explained that the plan does not set rules: that is the role of the zoning ordinance.

Mr. Popovich reviewed updates to the Plan:

Introduction: No significant changes

Section 1: Highlighted new plans since 2011, demographics updated (getting older and younger)

Section 2: Vision was a significant update (low impact design, additional tree canopy, multi-family and mixed use buildings, redeveloped commercial corridors, Ogden Avenue improvements)

Section 3: Land Use plan had minor modifications (map change in two locations and updated pictures)

Section 4: Add Historic preservation paragraphs, low intensity design, sidewalks updated (no longer have a sidewalk matrix), parkway trees improved, added historic preservation and parkway tree management policy recommendations

Mr. Thoman requested stronger language in Section 4 per parkway trees to not just replace, but actively seek out absent tree locations and place new trees.

Mr. Quirk, going back to Section 3, asked if the map change of the Future Land Use Map would stipulate a Zoning Map change. He expressed concern Meadowbrook Shopping Center and possibly limiting the current owner. Mr. Popovich responded that the plan would have room for interpretation to allow the owner to make use of their property.

Ms. Gassen said she felt the community was losing single family residential in a more affordable range, walkable to downtown. She requested to add language specific to “walk to town” or “proximity to town” in the Section 4 policy recommendations. Mr. Rickard cited the Downtown Focus Area and more form-based code in the Downtown Transition area regarding setbacks and yards.

Mr. Quirk asked a question whether Sears homes are protected, Mr. Popovich said not currently; that the Sears homes policy recommendation was from the 2011 plan and a way of drawing attention to the properties. Mr. Thoman participated in the 2011 ad-hoc committee and explained that it was identified for historical thematic districts. Mr. Maurer requested to change the reference to “Sears” homes as “kit homes.” Ms. Gassen requested to include language specific to continuing to identify ways to incentivize historic preservation.

Ms. Hogstrom requested to add more about trees as a method for stormwater mitigation and the mutual benefit. Also to encourage trees on private property. Mr. Thoman said trees on private property was a controversial topic five years prior. Used Wilmette as an example of a private land

tree ordinance. Ms. Hogstrom said she was not suggesting an ordinance, but something to encourage tree canopies on private property.

Ms. Hogstrom identified that improving access to the Forest Preserves, e.g., Hidden Lake, was discussed by the ad-hoc committee.

Mr. Popovich noted Section 5 included the elimination of the Sign Ordinance discussion, an update of 63rd Street to neighborhood commercial and added historic preservation as policy recommendation.

Mr. Boyle asked about revisiting downtown/commuter parking options. Mr. Popovich said there were past discussions about adding a parking deck north of the BNSF railroad tracks, but that with the carshare market developing, the idea was to wait and see how new markets may affect parking demand. Also, with the additional multi-family developments under construction, demand might change. Mr. Popovich said the bike plan was revisited and that design of a pedestrian underpath was discussed to cross the train tracks downtown.

Mr. Popovich provided updates on the following sections:

Section 6: Updated Belmont Road discussion, updated mobility discussion, updated maps, included discussions on new technologies, car & bike share, electric vehicles

Section 7: Not many changes. New Park District vision statement, updated maps, policy updates to include discussion on rain gardens and tree canopies.

Section 8: Updated school and village facility discussions.

Section 10 & Appendix: Added more descriptions of programs – Appendix was goals/objectives from TCD III.

Section 9: Focus Area Plans – There were five focus areas in 2011, seven now with the additions of 63rd Street & 75th Street. No significant changes were made to Belmont Ellsworth Focus Area. The Belmont Road underpass was added and former catalyst site #3 was developed so it was removed.

The Downtown Focus Area came before the Plan Commission in June for the Commission's review. The Commission's and Comprehensive Planning Committee's recommendations were forwarded to the Village Council in July and October, with individual meetings with Council members in between. As a result, three functional subareas were developed. The Comprehensive Planning Committee is working on developing a regulatory framework for these three areas (rules and regulations). These would build off the Comprehensive Plan and set the rules for downtown development. The regulatory framework would come back to the Plan Commission in spring.

Some concept recommendations have been updated, including potentially historic buildings on the map. Catalyst sites were updated with some removed and some added. Ms. Gassen identified the catalyst sites needed renumbering (did not match maps). Ms. Gassen requested to add something specific to the historic blacksmith shop downtown. She also corrected the discrepancy of "neighborhood transition" versus "downtown transition." Mr. Quirk identified that the Downtown Transition district needed to extend east of Prospect, beyond the current development. Mr. Quirk

asked about the key concept specific to Rogers and Main, and asked for clarification on “auto oriented uses.” Mr. Popovich explained it was describing drive-throughs and strip centers. Mr. Maurer asked if that use was more appropriate for Ogden. Mr. Popovich responded that the uses in the commercial building at Rogers and Main are appropriate uses for the DT district, however the building is incompatible with downtown guidelines as the building is setback from the street with parking along Main Street which does not create a streetwall.

Moving on, Mr. Popovich noted Butterfield Road Focus Area catalyst sites were updated. The Ogden Avenue Focus Area was combined (previously three areas, now one continuous corridor) and the catalyst sites were updated. Mr. Quirk asked about the future use of Packey Webb’s current dealership location. Mr. Popovich replied the intention was to attract another dealership.

Fairview Focus Area had no significant changes with plans remaining the same.

The 63rd Street Focus Area is new. The Plan notes this corridor is not the most effective commercial corridor with a range of uses present including schools, single-family, multi-family, commercial, and churches. The Meadowbrook concept is to convert Meadowbrook to neighborhood commercial with multi-family residential.

The 75th Street Focus Area is new as well. This corridor includes commercial nodes with a Corridor Commercial designation and single-family and multi-family residential. New key concepts include reviewing the Knottingham Subdivision to provide more efficient services. The consultant developed a concept plan for redevelopment of the Grove Shopping Center into a lifestyle center. The Comprehensive Planning Committee suggested developing a concept with more big box and broken up a little with multi-family on west

Chairman Rickard opened up the meeting to public comment.

Mr. Rich Kulovany, 6825 Camden, Downers Grove, expressed the desire to see development applications earlier in the process saying the community finds out about a petition after much effort/money has already been invested. Mr. Kulovany referenced an email he forwarded to the board previously and recommended a design review board for citizen input before developers invest money to say if it does/does not “fit in.” Mr. Kulovany said he and Ms. Gassen were invited to attend a Landmarks Illinois Suburban Alliance meeting in Glenview where form based code was discussed. They later called Trammell Crow, the developers in Glenview’s revitalization development to ask about the process/review. He then listed six communities they contacted, passed around a copy of Wheaton’s design guidelines as an example, and request a design review balance between Glenview (full public involvement) and Wheaton (staff implementation). He suggested the creation of an ad-hoc downtown design review board. Mr. Kulovany also suggested changing name of Architectural Design Review Board to include historic preservation in the name. Mr. Quirk asked if the downtown design review board would apply to all redevelopment in downtown, including businesses that can develop by right as this would create an additional layer of oversight. Mr. Kulovany responded that the downtown should move forward with form-based code alongside design professionals to determine guidelines. Mr. Popovich reminded the commission that according to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, board members cannot “respond all” to emails sent to the group. Mr. Popovich suggested adding language to the plan about considering a downtown design review board, to be further discussed by the Comprehensive Planning Ad Hoc committee. Mr. Quirk expressed concern that the creation of another board could enable others to interfere by

adding time and money to the process, a concern for current owners versus developers who have no existing investment in the properties. Mr. Kulovany said the first task of the downtown design review board could be to survey the downtown by professionals.

Ms. Cindy Zaeske, 1130 Forest, Downers Grove, was supportive of the downtown design review board. She said such a board could help keep the look of the town, and that she thought guidelines would not stop creativity, but would “challenge” it.

Ms. Christina Zaeske, 1130 Forest, Downers Grove, expressed her support for downtown design review/regulations. She said local modern development consisted of “drab boxes”, in an “American assembly-line style.”

Mr. Ed Olsen, 5138 Lee, Downers Grove, an architect of 40 years, moved to Downers Grove five years prior because of the community’s “quaint” feeling. He was concerned about the “build-up” in the downtown, and “paving over” of green space and stormwater implications. He said the community should be able to dictate to developers an architects the desired design.

Mr. Popovich suggested that the Comprehensive Plan Ad-Hoc Committee would discuss the implementation plan in its next phase of review, and emphasized that this phase (the review of the comprehensive plan) was “aspirational” in purpose, not “implementation.” Mr. Rickard said that the basics of design guidelines (e.g, height) were part of the zoning ordinance. He asked if the proposed design guidelines would be a separate plan or part of the comprehensive plan. Mr. Popovich said they were completely separate: that the implementation steps could be to propose changes to the zoning ordinance, and/or to hire a consultant to develop design guidelines.

Ms. Gassen said more time was needed to review the draft. Mr. Popovich said staff could provide hard copies of the comprehensive plan and highlight changes. Mr. Quirk asked if Plan Commission was required to make a recommendation, or just fulfilling a formality to review. Mr. Popovich said Plan Commission was required to review with a recommendation. Mr. Thoman proposed sending back the Downtown Focus Area section to the ad-hoc committee over concerns of design. Mr. Popovich said any proposed design regulations would be part of a two-step process, with the development of design guidelines as part of the second step: implementation. Ms. Gassen requested a redline copy of all changes to the comprehensive plan, the November Comprehensive Plan Ad-Hoc Committee meeting minutes, and a hard copy of the comprehensive plan update.

Mr. Rickard expressed support of looking into the creation of a downtown design review board. Ms. Leitschuh emphasized that historic preservation and design review guidelines have different intentions, and that design regulations do not guarantee the preservation of the existing building stock or feeling of a community. Mr. Maurer said he found the zoning ordinance to be the appropriate tool to foster new development (height, material, setback) per the communities desired characteristics. Ms. Gassen said she did not associate the design guidelines with historic preservation, but to evaluate “what we are replacing buildings with.” She said it was not to prolong the process with developers, but to give feedback from the beginning, and create design guidelines with “teeth in them.” She requested placing “for consideration” in the key concepts language to further nudge discussion around design guidelines. Mr. Boyle asked what would be the process to develop implementation steps. Mr. Popovich replied that the steps would be discussed first by the Comprehensive Plan Ad-Hoc Committee, then Plan Commission, then Village Council. Mr. Rickard asked how the group would create guidelines to “objectively” apply to downtown, and how

APPROVED 1/9/17

they could avoid subjective reviews which would be difficult to enforce with differing opinions. Mr. Maurer also expressed concern about objective versus subjective criteria. He warned against freezing the Village in a faux version of past and still not achieving the overall objective. He said progressive buildings can be complementary.

WITH RESPECT TO FILE 16-PLC-0019, MR. THOMAN MADE A MOTION THAT THE PLAN COMMISSION CONTINUE THE PUBLIC HEARING UNTIL JANUARY 9TH, AFTER RECEIPT OF THE REQUESTED MATERIALS TO BE PROVIDED BY STAFF.

SECONDED BY MS. GASSEN. ROLL CALL:

AYE: MR. THOMAN, MS. GASSEN, MS. HOGSTROM, MR. MAURER, CHAIRPERSON RICKARD

NAY: MR. BOYLE, MS. JOHNSON, MR. QUIRK

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 5-3

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 9:30 P.M. ON MOTION BY MS. GASSEN, SECONDED BY MR. QUIRK. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE OF 8:0.

/s/ Rebecca Leitschuh