

PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES
City of Geneva
109 James Street - City Council Chambers

Meeting #1143 – May 8, 2014

Chairman Rogers called the Plan Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call followed:

Present: Commissioners Case, Dziadus, Erickson, Evans, Leidig, Mead, Chairman Rogers

Absent: Commissioners Stevenson, Stocking

Others Present: Community Development Dir. Dick Untch and Planner Dave DeGroot; Recording Secretary Celeste Weilandt; Chicago-area Realtime Court Rptr. Joanne Ely

Public Present: Ms. Leah Jenski with Salternative, LLC; and Mr. Dave Patzelt with Shodeen Group

Approval of the February 13, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the February 13, 2014 meeting were approved on motion by Commissioner Case, seconded by Commissioner Leidig. Motion carried by voice vote of 6-0-1. (Abstain: Rogers)

Public Hearing

Planned Unit Development Amendment – Request to amend Exhibit II (Permitted Uses) of the

Fabyan & Kirk Planned Unit Development (Ordinance 1993 19A) to include “spa services and

products, including, but not limited to: alternative and holistic, floatation, speleotherapy, acupuncture, massage, light and heat therapies and food, drink, supplements, herbs, personal care and any other related products or other merchandise sold directly to consumers.”

Location: 1541 E. Fabyan Parkway/Applicant: Leah Jenski on behalf of Salternative LLC

Chairman Rogers read the protocol for the public hearing and swore in those individuals that would be speaking on the above petition.

[See Transcript from Chicago-Area Real Time Reporters]

Commissioner Mead moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Leidig. Motion carried by voice vote of 7-0.

Commissioner Mead moved to waive the two-week bifurcated process and vote on the above petition. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Motion carried by voice vote of 7-0.

Commissioner Mead moved to approve the request to amend Exhibit II (Permitted Uses) of the

Fabyan & Kirk Planned Unit Development (Ordinance 1993 19A) to include “spa services and

products, including, but not limited to: alternative and holistic floatation, speleotherapy, acupuncture, massage, light and heat therapies and food, drink, supplements, herbs, personal

care and any other related products or other merchandise sold directly to consumers.”
Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Roll call:

Aye: Case, Erickson, Evans, Leidig, Mead, Dziadus, Rogers

Nay: None

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 7-0

Concept Reviews

Amendment to the Downtown Station-Area Master Plan (Opportunity Site 3), Zoning Map Amendment from the B2-J Business District to the R7 Multiple-Family Residential District, Preliminary & Final Planned Unit Development - Request for conceptual review of a proposed redevelopment of properties located at the northeast corner of 7th Street and James Street. The concept would include demolition of 15 S. 7th Street, the two garages in the rear of 15 S. 7th Street, and the home at 627 James Street. The concept would provide six new townhomes facing 7th Street, six guest parking spaces for the townhomes, and a new garage for the remaining single-family home at 621 James Street.

Location: 13 S. 7th Street, 15 S. 7th Street, 621 James Street and 627 James Street/Applicant: Dave Patzelt on behalf of the Shodeen Group

Mr. Dave Patzelt, Shodeen Group, 77 N. First Street, Geneva, Illinois, stated he was before the commission seeking its direction on a preferred option for a development. He reviewed the location and surrounding character of the site from a number of photographs on the overhead. A review of the city's zoning map also followed with Mr. Patzelt explaining that the city's Downtown Master Plan recognized the site as No. 9 and was referred to Opportunity Site No. 3 with "possible residentially-scaled commercial, transition/business redevelopment, respectful of building design and intensity of nearby James Street residences and former residences that have been converted to businesses or business uses." Mr. Patzelt explained that he did meet with staff in a few meetings discussing six different concept plans with Plans 4 (the preferred plan), 5 and 6 being considered for townhomes. Details of each concept plan followed.

Mr. Patzelt handed out a hard copy of Alternative Plan No. 4, which removed the commercial building in its entirety and then lined up six town units facing 7th Street with garage access from the east side of the building, similar to the Dodson townhomes located on Second Street. The mustard home would be razed but the white home would remain and its current two-car garage would either remain or be reconstructed (along with the stairs) closer to the white home. Mr. Patzelt believed Plan No. 4 was ideal because the townhomes were a transitional use to the commercial use along State Street and townhomes existed on the west side of 7th Street as well as further south on 7th Street. Setbacks were discussed on this plan in more detail. He preferred the residential use facing 7th Street to give it more prominence to the building and to provide vehicular access onto James Street. A review of the setbacks also followed.

Next, Alternative Plan No. 5 would include keeping the 3000 sq. feet of the commercial building and removing a portion of it. A three-unit townhome building would be planned, removing the mustard house, and its front façade would face James Street, respecting the residential use of James Street. However, vehicles would be exiting onto 7th Street and parking behind the commercial building would be questionable. Lastly, Alternative Plan No. 6 was the same as Plan No. 5 but the vehicular access to the commercial building would be off of James Street.

Mr. Patzelt pointed out the current challenges of the commercial building on 7th Street and whether it was the right area for a commercial building, noting it had been vacant for many years with no interest in a commercial use. The question was whether to remove all of the commercial or a portion of it.

Asked if there was thought about expanding the townhome concept onto the white house since Shodeen owned it, Mr. Patzelt indicated there was some thought but in trying to be respectful of historic preservation, he felt the condition of the corner house was so poor that the Historic Preservation Commission could be fine with removing that house; however, the white house was not in poor condition, was occupied, and he surmised the HPC would have a difficult time allowing the white house to be razed. Chairman Rogers personally supported removing the white house since he also supported increasing density in the downtown area. If the market was right, he supported homes on both James and 7th Streets, since renting the current commercial building on 7th Street had no interested parties; Mr. Shodeen and the other commissioners concurred. Dialog then followed on whether stacked flats should be considered and, if so, the building would be either three or four levels in height, with parking or commercial located on the first floor, but the fourth floor would have to be stepped back to minimize the massing. Asked if accessing the parking lot to the north was considered from this site, Mr. Patzelt indicated that Mr. Anderson owned that property and had no interest in cross access.

After each commissioner provided their input, the commissioners appeared to be in support for the six townhomes facing 7th Street (option 4), and, in addition to removing the mustard-colored house, to remove the white house. There was the concern about the four-story height, however. Regarding landscaping, Mr. DeGroot indicated that by moving the current garage and the six guest parking stalls along the east property line and pushing them further to the west, it better aligned with the drive aisle and created a landscaped buffer. Commissioner Erickson closed by sharing some of the challenges of leasing out the current commercial building and the fact that if commercial were to go on the first floor, it would probably struggle like the existing commercial use. He preferred Alternative No. 4.

Dir. Untch provided staff comments which included that the HPC will want to see from Mr. Patzelt a demolition proposal/permit which includes a condition analysis of the mustard-colored historic building, what will it take to make the building code-compliant or viable in the market place, and can the developer recoup that investment. Dir. Untch emphasized that both, the mustard-colored and white buildings were contributing structures and the area was experiencing substantial reinvestment. However, since his staff-level meetings with Mr. Patzelt, he felt more comfortable with Alternative No. 4, with some flexibility for the north setback off of Cocoa Bean. The 10-ft. setback off of James Street, while it may have more mass, he did not believe it was much of a departure from what currently existed and could be “nudged up a little bit to the north.” He felt the townhomes facing James Street made more sense, pointing out that when reviewing Alternative Plan Nos. 5 and 6, the parking becomes “co-mingled.” Planner DeGroot also recommended that the relationship of the end unit to James Street include architectural detail to that elevation; Mr. Patzelt concurred with adding the details.

In response to staff comments, Mr. Patzelt believed that the justification (financial analysis) for razing the white house will be tough but he reminded the commissioners he went through the appeal process for Dodson House and believed the HPC would agree that the development turned out very well. To the mixed-parking comment with commercial/residential, he did not see it as an issue and cited Dodson Building 8 had it as well as other communities.

Chairman Rogers also shared that he hoped the HPC would look beyond the saving of one house and consider the “greater good” of the area by having a new townhome development, thereby adding to the density. Dir. Untch closed by explaining some of the buildings the HPC has reviewed, since requesting financial analyses from developers, citing the HPC has preserved buildings that have been retrofitted, and sometimes expanded, into viable uses, thereby returning the investment, whereas in other communities, he stated some historic buildings cannot even be considered in such a way.

Mr. Patzelt appreciated the commissioners' input and briefly shared some of the things that have been occurring at the Mill Race Inn.

PLAT OF SUBDIVISION

Request for conceptual review of an approximately 258 unit single-family residential subdivision on 96 acres located at the southeast corner of Illinois Route 38 and Brundidge Road. Property is located in unincorporated Campton Township. The applicant is proposing to annex the property to the City of St. Charles. The concept plan will be reviewed by the St. Charles Plan Commission on May 20, 2014 and the St. Charles City Council Planning & Development Committee on June 9, 2014. St. Charles has request any comments the City of Geneva may have on the proposal (due to being a mile and a-half of planning jurisdiction)

Location: Southeast corner of IL Rte 38 and Brundidge Rd./Applicant: Avanti Properties Group

Planner DeGroot clarified that the commission was reviewing this petition because site sits within the City of Geneva's mile-and-a-half jurisdiction, the southeast corner of the parcel abuts the Prairie Green Preserve, and the City of Geneva has a boundary agreement with the City of St. Charles. The parcel was also a part of the original Settlements of LaFox subdivision some years ago with the original lots being 12,000 sq. ft. versus the proposed lots of 6500 sq. feet. Per Mr. DeGroot, the developer was proposing to annex into the City of St. Charles and the St. Charles Plan Commission had not reviewed the proposal to date.

Staff comments included that this was a "testing of the waters" to see how far the developer could push for the single-family detached product. The recent St. Charles Comprehensive Plan reflected a rural residential development in the area and adding 250 units would impact surrounding roads that lead into Geneva. Staff felt a full impact study would be warranted from the City of St. Charles' perspective. Dir. Untch stated that Kane County currently listed Brundidge Road as a Rustic Road, with the goal to keep the rural flavor of the historic road. To add the suggested amount of housing units, the distribution of travel trips south and east to Randall Road would be significant. He also noted that the city strongly encourage that the development not impact the Prairie Green Preserve. After some general discussion about infrastructure and open space concerns, the commissioners agreed that the parcel lot sizes seemed a bit dense for a rural area and the development was a bad policy decision overall. Based on the concerns raised by commissioners and staff, **Commissioner Erickson made a motion to support staff's bullet points of concerns. Seconded by Commissioner Mead. Motion carried unanimously.**

Public Comment - None

Other Business

Planner DeGroot distributed a contact list for commissioners to review and update. He stated the commissioners were invited to a city-hosted training workshop (put on by CMAP) located at FONA on June 5th, 7:00 p.m. The workshop will include the Geneva Plan Commission, its Zoning Board of Appeals, and commissioners from the Village of North Aurora, City of St. Charles and City of Batavia. Further updates by staff included the commissioners getting computers on the dais; an upcoming text amendment from Faith Lutheran regarding its electronic message board; the relocation of Panera Bread to the former Applebee's restaurant on Randall Road (drive-through); an annexation by Resurrection Cemetery; a status of the CETRON building; and some other updates.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m. on motion by Commissioner Evans. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.