



WHEATON CITY COUNCIL PLANNING SESSION MINUTES

MAYOR PHILIP J. SUESS

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL BARBIER | COUNCILWOMAN ERICA BRAY-PARKER | COUNCILWOMAN SUZANNE FITCH

COUNCILMAN JOHN RUTLEDGE | COUNCILMAN TODD SCALZO

WHEATON CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 303 W WESLEY STREET, WHEATON, ILLINOIS 60187

Monday, May 28, 2019

1. Call to Order

The Wheaton City Council Planning Session was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Mayor Suess. The following were:

Physically Present: Mayor Suess
Councilman Barbier
Councilwoman Bray-Parker
Councilwoman Fitch
Councilman Rutledge
Councilman Scalzo

Absent: None

City Staff Present: Michael Dzugan, City Manager
John Duguay, Assistant City Manager
James Kozik, Director of Planning & Economic Development
Susan Bishel, Public Relations Coordinator

2. Approval of May 13, 2019 Planning Session Minutes

The City Council approved the May 13, 2019 Planning Session Minutes.

3. Comprehensive Plan/Market Study/Zoning Ordinance Update for the East Roosevelt Road Corridor

City Manager Dzugan stated the City enlisted the planning consulting team of Camiros Ltd. and Valerie Kretchmer & Associates to perform a market analysis and evaluate whether the City should update its Comprehensive Plan. The Planning & Zoning Board reviewed the consultant's recommendations, held several meetings on the topic, and provided a report with recommendations for the City Council.

Director of Planning & Economic Development Kozik reviewed the project scope and the previous 4 meetings held by the Planning & Zoning Board.

Chris Jennette of Camiros Ltd. reviewed the study area, which includes approximately 2 miles of Roosevelt Road from the eastern City limits to the Prairie Path. In Wheaton's 1999 Comprehensive Plan, Roosevelt Road from Naperville Road to the eastern City limits was designated a Special Focus Area with the goal of having low-density office and residential uses. Mr. Jennette stated since 1999, the nature of the corridor has evolved, with a shift away from retail, and an increasing number of buildings along Roosevelt in this area have been vacated.

Mr. Jennette stated the current conditions include a mix of single- and multi-family homes, some commercial businesses, a storage facility and more. He stated the type of development the City envisioned in the 1999 plan is not being achieved, so the City should look to provide flexibility for

businesses to want to locate here, while preserving nearby residential areas. He reviewed the current zoning of the corridor, which includes some C3 and R7 zoned areas and the OR district. The OR zoned area is restricted to offices and research, and there are additional limiting standards for this district.

In terms of urban design and infrastructure, Mr. Jennette reviewed some of the challenges, including the lack of cohesive visual character, absence of a continuous sidewalk network, no pedestrian-scale lighting, and no coordinated landscape treatment. Other challenges include the significant required setbacks, and a 15% higher required parking ratio compared to neighboring communities.

For the market study, Valerie Kretchmer & Associates concluded that this area is a local rather than regional market. However, national retailers would be interested in some locations, such as the intersections with Naperville Road and Warrenville Road, if the City did not have some of the OR District requirements. In terms of office spaces, the market study found the current spaces to be generally obsolete and difficult to attract tenants. The study identified sites along Roosevelt that would be appropriate for some small to medium multi-family housing.

Mr. Jennette outlined the opportunities they identified through workshops, staff discussions and stakeholder input, including: 1) Reconsider a mix of permitted and special uses along the East Roosevelt Road corridor, 2) Add flexibility for constrained lots, 3) Accommodate additional housing options, 3) Create a commercial focus area, and 4) Prioritize the creation of a unified streetscape. He summarized the visions statement for this area, which says it will be an aesthetically pleasing mixed-use corridor that protects adjacent residential areas while giving the corridor a unique identity distinguishing it from neighboring communities.

The study's guiding principles include: provide flexibility, protect existing neighborhoods, scale is critical, encourage a mix of uses, encourage redevelopment of converted single-family homes, maintain existing affordable housing, and balance parking requirements.

For the land use policy recommendations, Mr. Jennette stated the corridor would be divided into character areas, including (from west to east) a horizontal mix, commercial core, mixed use flexible and transition areas. He showed renderings of each area and outlined the characteristics of each, including office and townhouse development in the horizontal mix; a concentration of new development and redevelopment in the commercial core; a broad range of retail, service-oriented, office and multi-family uses in the mixed-use flexible; and a broad range of retail and service/repair uses in the transition area.

The zoning update recommendations are intended to align the development vision and land use policy with corridor-specific regulations. Mr. Jennette stated the proposed update would use a matrix that makes it clear what can be built in different areas. Other recommendations include reducing setback requirements to allow businesses to move closer to the street and away from residential areas; allowing for taller construction at some of the major intersections; removing the requirement for buildings in the OR District to replicate the look of residential homes; and eliminating the exterior masonry construction requirement. Instead, the recommendation is to establish design requirements that would prohibit certain materials but provide more flexibility for developers.

Mr. Jennette suggested the City work toward an entire zoning ordinance update that modernizes and streamlines the City's development regulations.

4. Public Comment

Ellen Chapelle, 801 Golf Lane, stated she believes residents still support the policy statements made in the 1999 plan and do not want to see the proposed changes implemented. She also expressed concern with how the City is approaching the issue of affordable housing and suggested it is a policy issue the City needs to address thoughtfully.

Dan Gries, 802 Warrenville Road, expressed concern with changing the allowed zoning uses along Roosevelt Road, as he believes there is less demand for retail businesses, and redevelopment could redistribute business away from downtown Wheaton. He also stated he thought the proposed changes would allow builders to have less oversight and build lower-cost buildings.

Eric Kobus, 425 Park Avenue, stated the portion of Roosevelt from Carlton to Warrenville is primarily residential, and he does not want to see retail allowed in that area. He stated there are several schools nearby and historic homes, and this area should remain as is or redevelop with more single-family homes to increase the City's tax base.

Ronnie Osco, 615 W. Park Avenue, stated she bought her home because of its proximity to the train station, Prairie Path and schools, and because the office behind her is a low-rise building. She opposes taller housing being allowed behind her home and urged the Council not to change the requirements from the 1999 plan, as the changes would be detrimental to surrounding residential areas.

Coleman Wolf, 801 Golf Lane, expressed concern that the proposed changes would build up retail, contribute to congestion and be detrimental to neighboring residents. He stated there are already vacancies and the report is not clear on what types of businesses would be interested in Roosevelt Road.

Martha Bradley, 818 Golf Lane, stressed the importance of making Wheaton a pedestrian-friendly community. She stated areas on Roosevelt Road are difficult for pedestrians to use at times due to narrow widths, snowplows covering sidewalks with snow, and the lack of a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles.

Bernadine Kowalkski, 619 W. Park Avenue, expressed concern that if more development is allowed, it would make flooding worse on Park Avenue, an area that already experiences flooding and damage to homes. She urged the City not to allow redevelopment to occupy a larger footprint on Roosevelt Road and not to lessen the standards for flood mitigation.

Laura Kobus, 425 W. Park Avenue, stated development such as a Starbucks near Roosevelt and Warrenville would be a detriment to the neighborhood and a safety issue for Whittier school students. She spoke in favor of keeping the zoning from Main to Carlton as office/research or residential zoning.

Shawn Okpebholo, 815 Pershing, spoke in favor of the City adding more affordable housing. He stated he grew up in affordable housing and was able to become a professor because of his access to very good schools. He encouraged Wheaton to add affordable housing to increase the city's diversity both culturally and economically.

Kristin Page, 423 S. Summit, stated she loves the diversity of her neighborhood and the availability of affordable housing. She stated the City should strive to add more affordable housing.

Elizabeth Hain, 724 Warrenville Road, stated she is concerned with the effect that national retailers would have on the corner of Warrenville Road and Roosevelt Road. She stated the nearby crosswalk at Warrenville and Park is already dangerous, and she believes there would be increased traffic on residential streets if there is more retail near the neighborhood.

Tom Ryan, 624 E. Evergreen, expressed concern with the City changing zoning to suit developers, and he wants the Council to ensure historic buildings between Main Street and West Street are preserved. He stated he doesn't think improving the streetscape on Roosevelt Road will encourage more people to walk along the busy street.

Barbara Green, 411 W. Park Avenue, stated she is happy with most of the office and research tenants currently near her neighborhood, and she does not want to see changes to Roosevelt west of Main Street. She expressed concern with adding retail to the corners of Warrenville and Roosevelt, and she stated the City should take into account changes with the retail landscape.

Nancy Flannery, 816 W. Elm Street, stated the report did not take into account historic preservation. She expressed concern that historic homes such as the one at 534 W. Roosevelt would not be protected. She spoke of the importance of Wheaton in the history of golf and the opportunity to develop Wheaton as a historic attraction incorporating Roosevelt Road.

Joe Jeffrey, 606 S. Washington, stated this report does a good job of looking at current conditions, but he doesn't believe it is balancing commercial needs with the needs of residential property owners. He stated construction of a 50- to 65-foot building will not be offset by moving the building slightly closer to Roosevelt Road. He expressed concern that the plan does not seem to address standards for what can be built along Roosevelt Road.

Dan Wible, 326 S. Lorraine, stated his main concern is protecting the neighborhood on the north side of Roosevelt on the east end of the study area. He stated this area should be improved, but this plan would not work. He suggested this area would be better turned into a greenway as an entrance to Wheaton.

Ron Almiron, 455 W. Front Street, stated he believes the plan does not respect the City's history or historic buildings. He encouraged the Council to enact a historic preservation ordinance, as history gives the City character and keeps property values high.

Natalie Mouw, 1510 Foothill Court, spoke in favor of the proposed development plan. She stated she thinks that history can be preserved while development is also encouraged. She expressed that allowing changes to setbacks would allow properties to be more versatile, and she thinks the City can find a middle ground that protects residential properties and allows development.

Steve Johnson, 720 S. Hale Street, spoke about changes the state of Illinois made in the 1990s to Roosevelt Road that closed off access to some formerly intersecting streets. He stated this was beneficial in keeping traffic moving and making neighborhoods safer, but he expressed concern that traffic would increase more if new developments locate on Roosevelt Road. He also spoke of

concerns with flooding in his neighborhood and the effect that more development would have on flooding. He also urged the Council not to get rid of affordable housing on Roosevelt Road.

Jim Crispin, 604 E. Evergreen, stated he thinks the plan as presented harms the neighborhood in terms of traffic, safety, noise, light and visual aesthetics, and he doesn't think there is a problem on Roosevelt Road that needs fixing.

Tony Olivio, 240 E. Park Avenue, expressed concern that the plan does not mention flooding. He stated the changes to fix flooding on Main Street are not working, and he thinks greater density on Roosevelt Road would make this worse. He urged the City Council to address flooding before focusing on redevelopment.

Beth Adamson, 819 E. Evergreen, stated she is near the core commercial area, and she is concerned with the effect that the proposed changes would have on property values and the safety of children due to increased traffic. She also encouraged the Council to be forward-thinking in what uses will be needed, as she believes technology will change the medical field and reduce the need for as many medical offices.

Roberta Stewart, 109 Park Avenue, expressed concern that this plan would draw people away from the downtown, and she would rather see a successful downtown. She also stated she is concerned with light pollution from new development and its effect on neighboring residences.

Kathy Rambo, 1933 E. Evergreen, stated she does not want developers to be able to build commercial businesses on lots behind Roosevelt Road. She stated she does not want to see 4- or 5-story buildings being constructed right near residential areas.

Eric Maldre, 713 E. Evergreen, read a quote from Councilman Barbier in the DuPage Policy Journal regarding why Wheaton is an ideal place to raise a family.

Jeff Evans, 1607 E. Evergreen, expressed concern with what a 5-story building on Roosevelt Road would look like overlooking his neighborhood street.

Mayor Suess stated there will be a second Planning Session to discuss this matter, and the City will provide notice of when that will take place.

5. City Council/City Staff Comments

Councilman Barbier encouraged the community to attend a ceremony at 3 p.m. June 8 to name the Warrenville Post Office after Cpl. Jeffrey Allen Williams.

Mayor Suess thanked the schools, scouting groups and others who participated in the Memorial Day Parade.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Bishel