



WHEATON CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

MAYOR PHILIP J. SUESS

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL BARBIER | COUNCILWOMAN ERICA BRAY-PARKER | COUNCILMAN SCOTT BROWN

COUNCILWOMAN SUZANNE FITCH | COUNCILWOMAN LYNN ROBBINS | COUNCILMAN SCOTT WELLER

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

Monday, June 27, 2022

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The public hearing of the Wheaton City Council was called to order at 7:02 p.m. The public hearing was held in the Council Chambers, Wheaton City Hall, 303 W. Wesley Street, Wheaton, Illinois. Upon roll call, the following were:

Present: Councilman Barbier
Councilwoman Bray-Parker
Councilman Brown
Councilwoman Fitch
Councilwoman Robbins
Councilman Weller

Absent: Mayor Suess

City Staff Present: Michael Dzugan, City Manager
James Kozik, Director of Planning & Economic Development
Joseph Tebrugge, Director of Engineering
Susan Bishel, Public Information Officer

Councilwoman Robbins moved and Councilman Weller seconded a motion to appoint Councilwoman Fitch as Mayor Pro Tem.

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Councilwoman Robbins
Councilman Weller
Councilman Barbier
Councilwoman Bray-Parker
Councilman Brown
Mayor Pro Tem Fitch

Nays: None

Absent: Mayor Suess
Motion Carried Unanimously

II. Public Hearing – ZA # 22-16/Rezoning and PUD/Block bounded by Liberty Drive on the north, Hale Street on the east, Willow Avenue on the south, and Wheaton Avenue on the west/Willow Avenue Apartments, LLC

Councilwoman Bray-Parker moved and Councilman Barbier seconded a motion to incorporate the written public comment received since the June 13, 2022 City Council Public Hearing into the

record.

	Roll Call Vote:
Ayes:	Councilwoman Bray-Parker Councilman Brown Mayor Pro Tem Fitch Councilwoman Robbins Councilman Weller Councilman Barbier
Nays:	None
Absent:	Mayor Suess <u>Motion Carried Unanimously</u>

a. Presentation

Tom Suminski, President of Banner Multifamily, 300 S. Riverside, Suite 1200, Chicago, reviewed the changes made to the proposed project since the last public hearing. Mr. Suminski stated the first change is that the Willow Avenue side of the proposed building has been pushed back an additional 3 ½ feet from the property line for a total setback of 4 feet 3 inches. This was accomplished by reconfiguring the drive aisles in the parking layout. The design also changed the entrance to the building's parking to a location closer to Hale Street. Additionally, the design has been changed so that the balconies on Willow Avenue no longer hang over the property line and will not hang over City sidewalks. Planter areas have also been extended so people would not be able to walk under the balconies. The developer also changed the proposed coloring for the project from a dark brown to a red brick, and the exterior sections in the previous design that were white have been changed to a beige color. Finally, the developer added additional architectural detailing near the top of the building.

b. Public Comment

Brad Paulsen, 170 Christina Circle, shared his personal comments in support of the proposal, stating he does not believe the scale is much different than other existing developments and this would not negatively impact the character of the downtown. He stated the added property value for the City would be a significant benefit for all residents of District 200, this project would help spur development south of the railroad tracks, and the project incorporates sustainable elements.

Mike Andrews, 317 S. Hale St., asked the residents present who did not support the project to stand or raise their hands. He stated he has talked with many residents, and those that he has talked to believe the project is too big and too dense for the area. Mr. Andrews expressed concern that some people believe that this project is set to go through, but a vote has not yet taken place.

Rich Barrie, 204 W. Evergreen, thanked the developer for moving the balconies back from extending over sidewalks. He expressed concerns that the size and layout of the building in relation to the train tracks would cause significantly increased noise in the downtown from trains.

Karen Andrews stated she did not believe there had been enough communication on this project and would have liked for the developer and the City to host a public forum where people could ask questions. She expressed concerns about errors and inconsistencies in the developer's

materials and presentations, and she urged the Council to consider other proposals.

Gabriella Reczek, 428 S. West St., stated she thinks the developer should continue to make changes so that the project follows all aspects of the City Code without the need for variations. She expressed concerns about safety for children in the area with increased volume of cars, and she is concerned with effect on property values for neighbors affected by the project.

Lou Blazeski, 217 W. Illinois St., stated he is in favor of development for this site but not one that is 7 stories high. He stated that he would like the City to question the developer on the economic feasibility of this project and why it must be this height.

Betsy Prange, 217 W. Illinois St., stated some residents opposed to this project are unable to attend meetings or speak to the Council, so she created a petition with more than 600 signatures of residents who support development but not one that is 7 stories high.

Christiane Blume, 125 W. Oak, stated she believes the 4-story limit for development should remain, and she expressed concerns about the density, traffic increase near a school, that the exterior does not fit into the character of the neighborhood, and the lack of green space.

Matt Vlasman, 404 W. Franklin St., expressed concern that 7 stories is too high for this project and that it would dominate the landscape.

Emily Nelson, 211 W. Indiana St., stated she is familiar with the TGM Danada apartments, which have approximately the same number of residents as this proposed development, and she does not think there would be enough green space or parking for a development of this density in the proposed location.

Steven Fisher, 812 Parkside, expressed concern about the City granting a variance for a 7-story building and whether other future developments would contribute to creating a wall of buildings south of the tracks. He also questioned whether District 200 could support increased enrollment from having more residents in this area.

Matt Gill, 403 S. Hale St., expressed support for this project as proposed, as he believes it will improve the downtown and increase the city's tax base.

Tony Stefancic, 961 Royal Glen Lane, Carol Stream, stated he is involved in commercial real estate in the downtown, and he expressed support for this project, citing its ability to help expand the City's comprehensive plan and provide future growth.

Steve Alesch, 27W554 Warrenville Road, Warrenville, stated he had an office at 213 Wheaton Avenue, and he expressed concerns about the size of the building, environmental impacts, potential for flooding, and increased traffic.

Sherry Torppey, 712 N. West St., stated she thinks the City should have sent out more letters about this project, and she has concerns with the modern look of the building, the density, increased traffic and a negative effect on the surrounding historical area.

William Fenili, of Wheaton, expressed concern that large developments in the area have decreased in assessment over time, and he believes a building of this size would impact police, fire and utilities in Wheaton.

John Camiola, 508 N. Main St., expressed concern about the density of the proposed project and thinks the City should not change its standards for development. He stated he thinks it will adversely affect the atmosphere of the downtown.

Ron Austin, 211 S. Wheaton Avenue, stated he is a property owner on the affected block and had collected about 75 letters of support from downtown business owners. He stated in order for downtown businesses to be successful, they need more foot traffic, which this development would provide.

Elizabeth Hain, 724 Warrenville Road, stated she found reviews online for other developments owned by Banner Apartments, and she read negative reviews of the management. She stated she is concerned with the height of the building and with the developer.

Jacob Grad, 330 S. Naperville Road, stated this block has not been historic in many years, and he expressed concern that some of the other critiques of this proposed project are not based on facts. He expressed support for the project and thinks the developer has accommodated concerns with the project through multiple changes.

Catherine Vlasman, 404 W. Franklin, stated more than 600 people signed a petition against this proposed project, and she would like to see numbers showing why this project could not be 5 stories instead of the proposed 7 stories.

c. **Council Comment**

Councilman Barbier stated the potential benefits of this project could be great, and he thanked the developer for their updates to address concerns. He stated he is continuing to take in the information and reflect upon it before making a decision.

Councilwoman Bray-Parker stated this is a high priority decision and thanked all who had shared their opinions.

In response to Councilwoman Bray-Parker's question about what would go into the space of the additional setback on Willow Avenue, Mr. Suminski stated this would allow for larger planters and greenery.

In response to Councilwoman Bray-Parker's question about garbage and recycling in the building, Mr. Suminski stated there would be separate garbage and recycling chutes inside the building.

To answer a question on the development's effect on the school district, City Manager Dzugan stated the developer spoke with District 200 and would provide a cash donation as part of the development. Director of Planning & Economic Development Kozik stated the student population generated by developments such as this is generally very low, so there are not concerns related to the school district's ability to accommodate additional students.

Councilman Brown stated this has been a long process for the developers but is newer for

residents, so there is a lot of emotion involved. He stated the biggest concerns expressed have been the design, height and encroachment, and the developer has made progress refining the design, has not addressed the height, and has addressed the encroachment concerns. He stated it would be beneficial to see numbers validating why this proposed height is necessary, and he would like to see this project move forward but thinks further collaboration is needed.

Councilwoman Robbins thanked the community for their feedback. She also thanked Banner for their efforts but stated they need to do more listening to the community's concerns and in accommodating the concerns.

Councilman Weller thanked residents for their participation in this process.

Mayor Pro Tem Fitch thanked the community for their comments and thanked Banner for their revisions.

In response to a question by Councilwoman Robbins, City Manager Dzugan stated the City could close the public hearing and continue to take public comments. He stated the Council can opt to keep the public hearing open and continue it to its July 11 Planning Session or close the public hearing.

Phil Lutkehans, attorney representing the developer, stated the developer could provide the Council with validation of the numbers showing the economics of the project. He stated the developer can't make the project viable below 7 stories. Mr. Lutkehans stated they could continue to make aesthetic changes on the design, but there is no need to continue the public hearing for minor design changes.

Councilman Brown moved and Councilwoman Robbins seconded a motion to close the public hearing.

Ayes:	Roll Call Vote: Councilman Brown Mayor Pro Tem Fitch Councilwoman Robbins Councilman Weller Councilman Barbier Councilwoman Bray-Parker
Nays:	None
Absent:	Mayor Suess <u>Motion Carried Unanimously</u>

III. Adjournment

Councilwoman Robbins moved the Councilman Barbier seconded a motion to adjourn the public hearing at 8:48 p.m.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Councilwoman Robbins
Councilman Weller
Councilman Barbier
Councilwoman Bray-Parker
Councilman Brown
Mayor Pro Tem Fitch

Nays: None

Absent: Mayor Suess
Motion Carried Unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Bishel