

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2024

The North Chicago Planning & Zoning Commission met on Monday, April 2, 2024, at 6:09 P.M. at 1850 Lewis Avenue in Council Chambers.

I. Call to Order/Attendance

Present: R. Jones (6:14pm), P. Carballido, A. Douglass, A. Jackson

Absent: G. Carr and G. Jackson

Staff Present: Taylor Wegrzyn, Director of Economic and Community Development; Howard Coppari, City Planner

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. Meeting Minutes for March 11, 2024

Motion by P. Carballido, seconded by A. Douglass, to approve Meeting Minutes for March 11, 2024

Ayes: P. Carballido, A. Jackson; A. Douglass

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent: G. Carr, G. Jackson, R. Jones

III. Old Business – None

IV. New Business

Siraj Asfahani and Kevin Clark, both of the Lakota Group, presented an update on the City's Comprehensive Plan. The presentation consisted of high-level insights into the existing conditions report, theme and goal areas, and implementation strategies. A website containing documents related to the Comprehensive Plan update is maintained at www.northchicagocomplan.com.

Commissioner Jones asked how much participation there was at the community workshop. Attendance was low with twenty-five to thirty people, some of whom were drawn to the meeting after staff held up "free pizza" signs. However, the engagement during the meeting with those who participated was substantial and informative. Separately, it was noted that a large number of individuals participated in the process through surveying at the Community Days festival.

Director Wegrzyn asked the group to share their biggest barriers for accessing Foss Park. Members of the Commission expressed similar opinions in that the park was inaccessible due to wayfinding and street/sidewalk networks, and there is a general lack of awareness about the park and its offerings.

Stacy Wilcox, a local property owner, noted that the new beach at Foss Park has the potential to be an incredible economic driver and tourist destination.

The Lakota Group continued their presentation and went into greater detail on each of the theme areas including utilities, parks, culture, safety, and economic development. Ms. Wilcox asked how the plan would help rental populations. Director Wegrzyn responded that it would help to improve the quality of housing and the supply available. Commissioner Jones inquired about property maintenance and why it seems particularly hard for owners in North Chicago to maintain their property. Director Wegrzyn noted that there are numerous socio-economic factors. Additionally, the building structures in North Chicago are typically much older than in surrounding communities. Daniel Desir, a member of the public, asked about the timeline for implementation. Director Wegrzyn noted that many of the implementation measures will occur over a long period of time, potentially ten years. He also noted that it is meant to be a guidebook and vision for the community. It is possible that some recommendations become obsolete or cost prohibitive or that the vision needs amending sometime in the future. Mr. Coppari, City Planner, further added that the Comprehensive Plan is often utilized by staff, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council in making decisions about all sorts of policy, investments, and civic functions.

The Lakota Group presented two concepts for feedback related to the Sheridan Crossing site. One concept plan featured an event stadium for football, soccer, and other events, and the other plan featured multi-family. Both plans featured commercial retail and hotels along the street frontages. Commissioner Jones asked why a stadium was being conceptualized. Director Wegrzyn replied that an entertainment use has long been considered for this site but that its form has changed many times over the years as market conditions change. For a time, movie theaters were big. Right now, flag football has become big. Women's soccer is growing. Outdoor concerts have remained a big staple as well. At this moment, a stadium with flexible uses seems very viable and appropriate considering the market drawn from the Navy installation, Rosalind Franklin University, and the city's young population. Chairman Jackson noted his preference for Concept B.

Ms. Donna Kalinoski, member of the public, suggested a banquet facility for the Sheridan Crossing site. She noted a strong demand for such a use in the area. Director

Wegrzyn noted that the hotel would likely include such space and asked the Lakota Group to make sure that the text explaining the concept provide that detail. Commissioner Carballido provided some background information on the Lake County Honor Flight and their historic use of the memorial located at Grant Place. It is no longer owned by a public agency. Commissioner Jones added that the housing proposed in the concepts needs to be of a much higher quality than what is currently being built in the city.

Commissioner Jones had to leave the meeting at 8:00pm.

V. Questions and Comments

None

VI. Public Commentary

None

VII. Adjournment

Motion by P. Carballido, A. Douglass, seconded by to adjourn the PZC meeting.

Ayes: P. Carballido, A. Douglass, A. Jackson

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent: G. Carr, G. Jackson, R. Jones

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 P.M.