

The City of Lake Forest
Plan Commission
Proceedings of the December 11, 2019 Meeting

A meeting of the Lake Forest Plan Commission was held on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, at 6:30 p.m., at City Hall, 220 E. Deerpath, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Commission members present: Chairman Kehr and Commissioners Michael Freeman, John Dixon, Jamie Moorhead, Monica Artmann Ruggles and Stephen Douglass

Commissioners absent: Commissioner Susan Athenson

Staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development

1. Introduction of Commissioners and staff and review of meeting procedures.

Chairman Kehr asked the members of the Commission and staff to introduce themselves and reviewed the meeting procedures followed by the Commission.

2. Consideration of the minutes of the November 14, 2019 Plan Commission meeting.

Consideration of the minutes of the November 14, 2019 meeting was postponed.

3. Public Hearing and Action: Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of approval of the final plat of subdivision for the Margaret M. and Hampton M. Swift Memorial Subdivision Plat. The tentative plat for this subdivision was previously approved by the Commission. The final plat is consistent with the prior approval and is presented for final review by the Commission as required by the Code.

**Property Owner: Washington/Michigan LLC
c/o Stewart Swift**

Presented by: Michael Adelman, attorney

Chairman Kehr introduced the agenda item and asked the Commission to declare any conflicts of interest or Ex Parte contacts. Hearing none, she swore in all those intending to speak on this agenda item and invited a presentation from staff.

Ms. Czerniak reviewed that in September, 2019, the Plan Commission voted to approve the tentative plat for the Margaret M. and Hampton M. Swift Memorial Subdivision Planned Preservation Subdivision. She stated that the property proposed for subdivision is presently addressed as 770 Washington Road and the site is bounded by Walnut and Washington Roads, and Westminster. She reviewed that the substantive aspects of a subdivision are reviewed during the deliberations on the tentative plat of subdivision. She stated that the final plat is presented to

the Commission as required by the Code, to allow confirmation that the final plat of subdivision is consistent with the approvals granted during the final phase. She stated that after the Commission takes action on the final plat, the plat, along with the Commission's recommendation, will be presented to the City Council for final action. She explained that since the property is located in the Historic Residential and Open Space Preservation District, the Council will ultimately need to approve the subdivision through adoption of an ordinance granting a Special Use Permit. She reviewed that the property is the former site of a house that was approved for demolition. She stated that four lots are proposed consistent with the R-3 zoning district. She stated that all of the lots are larger than the minimum required 40,000 square foot lot size and all of the setbacks meet or exceed the setbacks required in the R-3 zoning district. She stated that as required by the Plan Commission as part of tentative approval, conditions are in place identifying three significant tree groupings for preservation and limiting and directing the future placement of curb cuts along the streetscape. She confirmed that preliminary engineering plans were reviewed by the City Engineer and noted that review of the final engineering plans is nearing completion. She stated that the plat is in conformance with the Commission's approval of the tentative plat and the City Code. She stated that if the Plan Commission is satisfied that the final plat is in conformance with the earlier approvals, it would be appropriate to forward a recommendation to the City Council in support of the final plat for the Swift Planned Preservation Subdivision and the associated Special Use Permit. She noted that Michael Adelman, the family's representative, and Stewart Swift, one of the property owners, are in attendance and available to answer questions.

Chairman Kehr invited questions from the Commissioner. Hearing none, she invited public testimony.

Art Miller, 181 Wildwood Road, stated that he is a member of the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation. He noted that during the Historic Preservation Commission's consideration of the request from the Swift family for demolition of the house, the family invited representatives of the Foundation to tour the house and the grounds. He stated that the Foundation eventually, reluctantly supported the demolition of the house without a proposed replacement residence because the property was going to be sold to a buyer who would later redevelop the property. He stated that the Foundation expressed a strong desire to have the southern portion of the property facing the Walnut Road streetscape, set aside as open space. He stated that the owners then decided to subdivide the property rather than sell it as a single parcel. He acknowledged that the family has made some accommodations since the last meeting by increasing the setbacks along the streetscape however, in his opinion, the four lot subdivision is not in keeping with the public input requesting preservation of the south lawn along the Walnut Road streetscape. He stated that labeling the subdivision as "Memorial" is an affront to the Library since no public benefit is offered by the subdivision. He stated that he is dismayed about this atypical designation of the subdivision as

“Memorial”. He stated that including the word “Memorial” in the name of the subdivision is inappropriate adding that even the preserved front lawn of the Library was not designated as a memorial.

Hearing no further requests to speak, Chairman Kehr closed the public hearing and returned the matter to the Commission for final questions.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dixon, Ms. Czerniak stated that to her knowledge, the City has not limited the name of a subdivision except to assure that the name does not duplicate a name of an earlier subdivision to avoid confusion.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dixon, Mr. Adelman stated that the name of the subdivision was his idea. He explained that the owners of the property are the 12 surviving children of Margaret and Hampton Swift. He stated that the name was intended to honor the parents and was not intended to signify anything greater than that.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Kehr invited final comments from the Commission and a motion.

Commissioner Douglass stated that given the prior approval of the tentative plat for the subdivision and recognizing that no new facts or changes are presented, he is in favor of proceeding with recommending final approval of the subdivision.

Commissioner Moorhead agreed with Commissioner Douglass noting that the plat as presented is consistent with the previous approval.

Commissioners Ruggles and Dixon agreed with the comments of Commissioners Douglass and Moorhead.

Commissioner Freeman made a motion to recommend approval of the final plat for the Margaret M. & Hampden M. Swift Memorial Planned Preservation Subdivision to the City Council along with approval of the associated Special Use Permit. He noted that the motion includes the following conditions of approval.

The final plat shall reflect the following:

1. Increased setbacks are reflected as follows:
 - Lots 1 and 2 - a 20 foot setback is reflected from the west property line.
 - Lots 2 and 3 – the front yard setback along Washington Road is increased beyond the required 40 feet setback and ranges from 90 to 140 feet.

2. Identification of three significant groupings of trees and a notation that curb cuts and driveways must be located to minimize impacts on these tree groupings.
3. Notation that only open, non-sight obscuring fences are permitted within the front yard setbacks of any lot.
4. Notation that Lots 2 and 3 are limited to a single curb cut.
5. Notation that the driveway and curb cut on Lot 3 may be located within the 15 foot side yard setback if determined to be the optimum location by the Historic Preservation Commission.

And

The approving ordinance will incorporate the following conditions:

1. Prior to recording, the final plat of subdivision shall be subject to final approval by the City Engineer and Director of Community Development.
2. The Historic Preservation Commission is directed to consider the following factors when reviewing proposed driveway locations: preservation of parkway trees, protection of healthy trees within the Tree Preservation Areas, limiting impervious surface to the extent possible, considering curved driveways to minimize direct views into the property and assuring appropriate sightlines for safety purposes.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dixon and the motion was approved by a 6 to 0 vote.

4. Public Hearing and Action: Continued consideration of a request for approval of Phase 3 of the McKinley Road Redevelopment. Approval of the overall site plan, a plat of consolidation and related approvals. Two buildings are proposed as the final phase of the development, a multi-unit building on the south portion of the site and a duplex (two-unit) building on the north portion of the property.

Property Owner: The City of Lake Forest

Contract Purchaser: 361 Westminster LLC (50% Peter Witmer and 50% Todd Altounian)

Presented by: Peter Witmer, architect

Chairman Kehr introduced the agenda item and asked the Commission to declare any conflicts of interest or Ex Parte contacts. Hearing none, she swore in all those intending to speak and invited a presentation by the petitioner.

Mr. Witmer introduced the agenda item and stated that in response to comments heard at the last meeting, the plan was further refined. He noted that the comments received at the meeting and from some neighbors after the meeting, focused on the north end of the building. He stated that in his opinion, the comments resulted in positive changes. He stated that the overall height of the building was reduced by pushing the southwest corner of the building into the

ground one foot, eight inches. He stated that this change allows some regrading on the site which improves the relationship of the development to the single family homes to the east. He noted that as a result of pushing the southwest corner of the building into the ground, the pedestrian entrance to the building located at that corner is now at grade, eliminating the need for a ramp at that location and simplifying the architecture and providing more space for landscaping. He reviewed the setbacks of the various components of the building from Westminster as now proposed. He stated that the location of the ramp down to the underground garage did not change. He pointed out that the porch at the north end of the building was shifted away from the east side of the building, to the center, and the mass of the third floor element was shifted 10 feet further back from the Westminster streetscape, to the south. He reviewed those elements in more detail. He said that questions were raised about the location of the HVAC units. He explained that the air conditioner units are residential in scale, similar to those used for single family homes. He stated that the air conditioner units for the first floor units cannot be located on the roof so they are proposed to be located in a niche in the building, on the east façade. He stated that the units will be screened with a brick wall and covered by the second floor space. He explained that the HVAC units for the second and third floor units will be located on the roof, generally in the center, and screened by extended parapet walls. He stated that the elevator override will be located in the same area. He reviewed the elevations of the building that were presented at the November meeting and noted that since that meeting, a mansard roof was integrated into the north end of the building to bring down the perception of height. He noted the relationship between the proposed building and the first building now that the height of the third building is reduced. He stated that the third building is now proposed to be eight feet lower than the first building except for the center area where the parapet is extended to screen the mechanicals. He reviewed that as now proposed, the southeast corner of the third building is 36'6" in height, the center, 38'6", the two-story element with the mansard roof at the north end of the building is 36'6" the one-story element at the north end of the building is 29' in height and the screen porch at the north end of the building is 17'9" in height. He reviewed the massing on each elevation again noting the step down at the north end of the building. He presented a birds eye view of the north end of the building and explained the details of the ramp to the underground garage. He stated that it will be difficult to see the garage door even from the alley on the west side of the building. He stated that there will be landscaping on both sides of the driveway ramp and the walls along the ramp will be brick, not concrete. He pointed out a stairway adjacent to the ramp to provide for pedestrian access to the garage. He reviewed a plan of the building illustrating how the various components step back from the Westminster streetscape. He presented sections through the building at different points and reviewed each elevation as now proposed. He noted a large spruce tree near the east property line, at the northeast corner of the building, that will be preserved if possible. He presented perspective sketches of the building from various points along Westminster. He pointed out that the green

space in front of the building relates to the front yard of the property to the east and becomes essentially a front yard similar to other front yards in the neighborhood. He presented other perspective views of the proposed building. He noted that the vertical elements on the third building relate to the first building to re-enforce that the development is cohesive. He stated that the landscape plan continues to be a work in progress. He reiterated that additional landscaping was added at the southwest corner of the building as a result of lowering the building. He stated that the landscaping along Westminster is intended to frame an open lawn area with plantings along the perimeter and foundation plantings, similar to a front yard for a single family house. He noted that a mock-up of the setback of the various building elements was installed at the site to convey the relationship of the building components to the surrounding development. He stated that a representative of Mariani Landscaping is available to answer questions and hear comments that will be taken into account as an overall landscape plan for the development is refined and finalized. He stated that the overall landscape plan will assure that there is continuity of and control over the landscaping for all three phases of the development. He noted that he met with the adjacent neighbors to the east to discuss possible regrading, the removal of declining trees and enhanced landscaping in their yards as part of the project. He stated that before committing to specific plantings, it will be important to wait for the grading and drainage plan to be prepared. He stated that if drainage swales are required, plantings will need to be sited to not obstruct water flows. He stated that a landscape plan was presented to him by Mr. Donovan for his yard and is a good start toward a final plan. He stated that he has also talked with the neighbors about a fence along the property line. He stated that the details of the landscaping and any fencing that is proposed will be presented when the project is brought back to the Commission for formal action. He stated that as requested, a sun/shade study was completed. He presented an illustration of shadows throughout the day, from dawn to dusk, in winter and in summer. He pointed out that by pulling the building back from Westminster, the amount of sunlight reaching the back yards of the homes increased in the late afternoon, in the summer. He presented an image comparing the size of the green space at the south end of the development site to the Greensward in Market Square noting the similarity in size. He stated that the green space near the Library will be a public space and will offer opportunities to the Library in the future. He stated that the green space at the north end of the building, on Westminster, is not a public space and is intended as more of a front yard, similar to the front yards of the homes along Westminster. He noted that he was contacted by staff about workers on the site prior to 7 a.m. He stated that they understand the rules and have instructed the contractors that they need to comply with them. He stated that the concrete pour, which requires heavy trucks at the site, is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.

Ms. Czerniak reviewed the process to date for the McKinley Road Redevelopment and specifically for the third phase of the project. She acknowledged that the

review process has been long and that has resulted in some confusion about where the process stands. She reviewed that prior to the Plan Commission's involvement in the development, a task force studied the overall area located east of McKinley Road, near the train station. She stated that the Plan Commission began discussions of redevelopment of the area in 2016 and forwarded a recommendation to the City Council in support of a master redevelopment plan for the area and redevelopment parameters. She stated that the City Council, based on the Plan Commission's recommendation, approved the master plan in January, 2017. She stated that the master plan anticipated the redevelopment of the three parcels fronting on McKinley Road that were previously developed with office buildings and the southern portion of the City owned property which, at the time, was the site of the Masonic Temple which was occupied by the Historical Society. She stated that shortly after that approval, the City Council determined that it made sense for the entire City owned parcel to be included in the redevelopment and negotiations with the developer followed about incorporating the north portion of the site as part of the redevelopment. She stated that at first, the developer was reluctant to take on additional land area however, an agreement was reached and the Council authorized a Purchase/Sale Agreement with the developer for the entire City owned parcel. She clarified that currently, the property remains in the ownership of the City pending approval of the third phase of the development. She reviewed that the Plan Commission considered and approved the first phase of the development and construction began. She stated that during discussions about the second phase of the development, it was acknowledged that there were some modifications to the site and building as a result of the acquisition of a portion of the property owned by the Church of the Covenants. She reviewed that the acquisition of the property allowed the first and second buildings to have similar proportions along McKinley Road. She stated however that the configuration of the green space to the east of the second building changed as a result of the modification of the second building and in response, the Plan Commission strongly urged the developer to expand the green space to the east, across the south portion of the phase three property. She noted that the Commission also directed staff and the developer to present conceptual plans for the third phase of the development to the Plan Commission early in the design development process and before plans were finalized. She noted that the Plan Commission directed that early opportunities be provided for the Commission and for neighbors to have input into the design of the third phase of the project. She reviewed that the Plan Commission first saw and provided input on a conceptual plan for the third phase of the project in March, 2019 adding that the Commission's discussions about the conceptual plan continued at the June, September and November meetings. She stated that after each meeting, the developer modified the plans in an effort to address the comments received from the Commission, neighbors and members of the public. She stated that during the extended conceptual review, staff discouraged the petitioner from preparing detailed plans or completing technical studies pending affirmation from the Plan Commission that the conceptual plans appear to be in conformance with the

previously approved master plan. She noted that through the process to date, the developer has spent significant time revising plans and preparing graphics and the model. She stated that consistent with past projects, this project has improved as a result of the input received and the in-depth review process to date. She stated that at this time, it would be appropriate for the Commission to indicate whether or not the conceptual plans as now presented appear to be generally in conformance with the approved master plan. She stated that with an indication from the Commission, the developer can decide whether or not to move forward with development of more detailed plans and the various technical documents that will be needed in order for the Commission to make a formal recommendation to the City Council for tentative approval. She stated that since the Commission is only considering conceptual plans at this point, no zoning entitlements have been or will be granted at this point and there is no guarantee of future approvals. She stated that if the Commission indicates general support for the plan as presented, the petitioner will likely appear before the Historic Preservation Commission at the January meeting for review of the building massing, architectural details, landscaping and exterior lighting. She stated that after review by the Historic Preservation Commission, and after preparation and staff review of the preliminary engineering plans and the tentative plat of the overall planned development, the petition will return to the Plan Commission for a formal recommendation for tentative approval. She stated that the Commission's recommendation, along with the recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission, will then be forwarded to the City Council for action and, if tentative approval is granted, the petitioner would then proceed with finalizing the various documents, staff would conduct a review of those documents, and the petition would be presented to the Commission for final review and action. She stated that as the Commission is aware, the substantive aspects of a petition are usually addressed during the conceptual and tentative review phases. She stated that final action by the Council will be consideration of an ordinance which would approve the various aspects of the development concurrently in the form of a Special Use Permit. She stated that the City Council has not in the past approved zoning entitlements prior to having the details of the overall project. She stated that as directed at the last Commission meeting, staff talked with Library staff about the value of the proposed green space. She confirmed that the Library supports retaining the expanded green space because it offered opportunities for the Library in the future as a level area that could accommodate programs or events. She acknowledged that one complaint regarding early work on the second building was received by staff since the last meeting. She stated that staff is in communication with the developer on this issue. She stated that the staff report included recommended conditions of approval if the Commission desires to indicate general support of the conceptual plans.

In response to questions from Commissioner Moorhead, Mr. Witmer reviewed the square footage of each of the buildings in the development noting that the first building is 49,275 square feet, the second is 29,393 square feet and the third is

22,929 square feet. He reviewed the change of the grade of the land across the site and confirmed that the third building will step down from the first two buildings. He reviewed the elements of the proposed building that are closest to the house on the 373 Westminster property. He stated that he estimated the height of the house on the neighboring lot at about 25 feet.

In response to questions from Commissioner Ruggles, Mr. Witmer stated that the terrace at the north end of the building will likely be bluestone and he confirmed that it is for the private use of the occupants of the adjacent unit and not a common element for use by all of the tenants of the building. He confirmed that landscape screening is planned along the property line and noted that the outdoor spaces are oriented to the north, south and west. He noted one exception is the small balcony located in the niche on the east elevation. He stated that if possible, depending on how the units are configured, that balcony may be eliminated. He noted that the screen porch at the north end of the building was pulled away from the east property line. He confirmed that there will be a 42" high guard rail around the terraces. He confirmed that the roof top mechanicals will be located behind the parapet but acknowledged that the plumbing vents will need to penetrate the roof at various locations. He noted however that given the limited sightlines, they will likely not be visible. He stated that the elevator override will be located behind the extended parapet in the center of the building. He stated that there will not be any roof top terraces on the building. He confirmed that a public access easement will be recorded over the green space at the south end of the building. He noted that the walkability of the development for residents and for the public is a key feature of the site.

Commissioner Ruggles encouraged the Historic Preservation Commission to carefully review the screening of the mechanicals, the landscaping proposed along the east property line to screen the active areas at the north end of the building and the overall architectural detailing.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dixon, Mr. Witmer stated that it may be possible to plant grass on the terrace rather than use bluestone he noted however that the surface of the terrace will not likely be visible from off of the site. He added that occupants of the units may choose to enhance the terrace with potted plants.

In response to questions from Commissioner Freeman, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that the Plan Commission is a recommending body and does not have the authority to grant approval of any element of the development. She confirmed that the City Council consistently has not taken action to approve a development or any zoning entitlements until all aspects of the proposed development are detailed, understood and until the reviews by appropriate Boards and Commissions are completed.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dixon, Ms. Czerniak agreed to work to facilitate discussions among the various parties about how to underground the remaining ComEd lines located on the 333 Westminster property.

Commissioner Freeman noted that the owners of the units in the 333 Westminster building were offered the opportunity to participate in the larger undergrounding project earlier. He stated that undergrounding the lines will benefit the residents of the 333 Westminster building as well as the residents of the new development. He stated that in his opinion, the private property owners who will benefit should pay for the project, not the City tax payers. He stated that he is opposed to the City funding the undergrounding of the ComEd lines.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Kehr invited comments from the public.

Art Miller, 169 Wildwood Road, commented that the first two buildings in the development are designed in the Georgian style and work nicely opposite the train station and Market Square. He noted that as now presented, the third building is more reminiscent of the 1870 stable formerly located on the site and as a result, does not read as part of the larger development. He stated that the design of the third building as presented in November was more Georgian in character, consistent with the two buildings fronting on McKinley Road. He stated that the Georgian design presents a classier look and relates better to the homes along Westminster and may be a better solution for the long term.

Jim Opsitnick, 971 Verda Lane, stated that in his opinion, the project is trying to do too much in a small space. He stated that the massing of the proposed building is a problem along with the limited setback from the east property line and is a disservice to the neighbors to the east.

Doug Donovan, 373 E. Westminster, confirmed that he met with the developers since the last meeting. He stated that he took a proactive step and had his landscape architect and engineer draw up a landscape plan to help mitigate the impact of the proposed development on his property. He stated that the meeting was a positive exchange and ended with agreement on landscaping, fencing and drainage. He stated that it is his assumption that there will not be any drainage improvements or drainage flows affecting his property so the landscape plan he presented should be workable. He stated that the recent discussions are steps in the right direction. He stated however that the massing of the proposed building remains a concern for him and his family. He stated that the discussions about the project to date have been exhausting, repetitive and stressful for his family. He stated that he has spent money and taken time away from his family to deal with the proposed development. He stated that he was not able to follow the shadow study that was presented but noted that it distracts from the key point that the massing of the building is too large. He noted that if the portion of the

building north of where the air condition units are proposed was eliminated, the footprint of the building would be similar to the Masonic Temple that was previously located on the site and would be consistent with the master plan. He stated that a 40 foot tall building, stepping down to Westminster, immediately adjacent to his property is too large. He stated that he cannot support the project. He noted that although the north portion of the building is stepped down, it will read as taller from his property because his property is at a lower grade. He stated that from his rear yard, he will be looking at a 40 foot structure, only 15 feet away. He stated that the building will take away his privacy and landscaping will not address a 40 foot tall building. He presented a photo of the former Historical Society building noting the green space in front of it along Westminster. He said that building seemed tall and it was only a story and a half. He noted that as presented, the front of the proposed building is taller than his home. He stated that the plan does not adequately consider the neighbors and is not fair, just or neighborly.

Rommy Lopat, 410 E. Woodland Road, stated that she is speaking as an interested audience member. She agreed with Mr. Opsitnick that the building as proposed seems too large and too tall. She noted that the height of the apartment buildings proposed on the Laurel and Western Avenues site was reduced. She stated that the sunlight study was difficult to understand because a "before" illustration was not presented. She challenged the Commission about the master planning process for the entire site and questioned what alternatives were explored for the area. She stated that as she looks at the plan, she is more in favor of the building proposed for the third phase of the project than the building in the second phase. She noted that when the train station was being renovated she suggested to the City that the office parcels be acquired by the City for green space to extend Market Square across the tracks. She also suggested that land be acquired from the Church to provide an access to the Library from McKinley Road. She questioned what the landscape standards will be for the project noting that the landscaping that was promised on the Laurel and Western Avenues site was not delivered. She suggested that consideration be given to sustainability standards, community gardens, herb gardens, planting pollinators and roof top gardens. She noted that removing invasive species of trees is commendable however, some of those trees may be 30 feet tall and replacing them with seven foot tall arbor vitae will not provide an adequate buffer. She encouraged consideration of the bigger picture, beyond looking at individual projects.

Hearing no further requests to speak from the public, Chairman Kehr invited further questions from the Commission. Hearing none, she invited a response to public testimony from the petitioner.

Mr. Witmer stated appreciation for the comments offered. In response to Mr. Miller he stated that the review process resulted in a change to the architectural style of the third building in an effort to balance various interests. He agreed that during

the Historic Preservation Commission review process, the details of the building can be looked at in more detail. He stated that Mr. Donovan accurately characterized their meeting. He stated that he understands that Mr. Donovan continues to feel that the building is too large but noted that the project has evolved significantly adding that he has continually tried to create a design and building form that integrates into the surrounding neighborhood. He stated that many different schemes were considered for the overall development and he stated that he believes that the development will serve the City well over the long term making the point that the development offers residential products that do not exist in the community. He stated that the development has provided long term residents with a housing option that they love. He stated that he is proud of the development but acknowledged that there is still room for improvement. He stated that the walkability of the development will benefit the residents living there and the larger community. He stated that the review process has been thoughtful and stated his intention to continue to work with the various interested parties.

Ms. Czerniak stated that since the last meeting, Mr. Donovan met with the City Engineer to review the existing conditions on his property and his concerns about drainage. She stated that the information provided by Mr. Donovan will be helpful to the City Engineer when the preliminary drainage and grading plans are submitted for review. She reviewed that long before the Plan Commission considered the individual phases of the McKinley Redevelopment, there were community discussions about many options for redevelopment of the area. She stated that there was a conscious decision to encourage redevelopment of the area with multi-family residential to bring residential units of varying types back into the Central Business District. She stated that during the ongoing discussions on the update of the City's Comprehensive Plan, various themes can be further explored including land uses, sustainability and a long term vision for the Central Business District.

Chairman Kehr invited Commission comment.

Commissioner Freeman stated that Mr. Witmer should be proud of how the development has evolved. He noted that at this point, to pursue a Georgian architectural style for the building, would mean starting over. He stated that the discussions to date resulted in the style now proposed which is more residential in character as opposed to commercial. He stated his appreciation to all of the neighbors who have offered comments and in particular to the representatives of the Church and Library commenting that their cooperation led to an improved project. He stated his support for the expanded green space near the Library as reflected on the current plan. He noted that the green space as proposed mirrors the green space in Market Square in size. He stated his hope that as the Library evolves, the green space is used to benefit the larger community. He stated that although it is not the developer's responsibility, as part of this project, there may be the opportunity to improve the conditions on neighboring properties which now

experience drainage issues due to existing grades. He encouraged discussions and cooperation around the potential to relocate the ComEd lines underground but reiterated his opposition to the City funding that project for the benefit of private property owners. He stated that it is not his intent that the Historic Preservation Commission revisit a building design that increases the building mass or height. He stated that the discussions to date have resulted in the plan as it is now presented and discouraged the Historic Preservation Commission from starting over. He stated that this project is a good example of how this community works together to resolve issues and achieve a better end product. He stated that all parties should be proud of how the project has evolved.

Commissioner Dixon thanked staff for working to bring the various parties together throughout the process. He reiterated that the planning process for this area started a long time ago and included the work of a task force, the Commission's discussions about the master plan for the area and ultimately, the Commission's review of each phase of this project over the course of many months. He stated that there has been community discussions about this site for decades. He stated that the process was extensive in deference to the neighbors and the issues raised. He stated that a tremendous amount of thought and effort has gone into this project on the part of the developer, the neighbors and the Plan Commission.

Commissioner Moorhead stated appreciation for the way the development proposal has evolved particularly over the course of the September and November Plan Commission meetings. He stated that in his opinion, all of the issues raised with respect to the conceptual plan have been addressed. He noted that he previously raised a question about whether the traffic study prepared at the beginning of the project should be updated. He stated that the traffic study was reviewed by the City's consultant and found to still be relevant. He stated that staff provided him with the history of how the green space at the southern portion of the development evolved and why it is important. He noted that the driveway ramp to the underground parking was relocated from Westminster to the alley. He noted that the current plan presents a more residential character on Westminster as a result of the reduction of the overall mass and height of the building. He stated that in his opinion, the issues raised during review of the conceptual plan have been adequately addressed.

Commissioner Douglass stated that throughout the process to date the petitioner has been extremely responsive to the input offered by the neighbors and the Commission, especially with the modifications made since the last meeting. He stated that there are architectural details that need to be resolved but acknowledged that those are the purview of the Historic Preservation Commission, not the Plan Commission. He stated that he agrees with staff's findings and recommendations.

Commissioner Ruggles stated that the project should be presented to the Historic Preservation Commission for resolution of various details. She noted that the change from a Georgian style to the current style keeps the scale down through the use of dormers rather than a full three story mass. She commended the petitioners noting that the project is much improved.

Chairman Kehr summarized that there appears to be a consensus among the Commissioners that the conceptual plans as now presented appear to be generally consistent with the previously approved Master Plan. She noted that the conceptual plan achieves the goals set out including: adding residential density to the City's core, providing additional parking for the Library, providing publicly accessible green space, improving the walkability of the area, and eliminating cut through traffic from the Library into the neighborhood along Westminster. She stated appreciation for the comments from the public noting that the comments and questions raised resulted in an improved development. She added that she also appreciates the petitioners openness to the comments offered throughout the process to date. She noted that a front yard is provided at the north end of the development, on Westminster, to serve as a gateway to the neighborhood to the east and separate it from the more intense development to the west. She noted that some of the public comments referenced issues that were previously considered by the Commission in the earlier discussions. Hearing no further comments from the Commission, she invited a motion.

Commissioner Freeman made a motion to conclude the Commission's early review and input on the proposed site plan for the third phase of the McKinley Road redevelopment with the indication that the Plan Commission finds the conceptual plans presented on December 11, 2019 to be general in conformance with the Master Plan.

He stated that to be clear, by this motion, the Commission is not granting any entitlements or guarantees of approval of the site plan, zoning entitlements or the overall plan.

He stated that the motion includes the following direction:

1. Forward the development to the Historic Preservation Commission for review of the design aspects of the building, landscape and hardscape. The Historic Preservation Commission is asked to take note of the work and discussions of the Plan Commission to date and is asked to focus particularly on the following aspects of the project.
 - a. Appropriate articulation of the portion of the building that will serve as a visual terminus to the east/west road.
 - b. The overall massing, roof forms and articulation to assure an appropriate transition from the larger, more intense development to the west, to the single family homes to the north and east.
 - c. The driveway entrance ramp to assure that it is properly screened through positioning, masonry walls and landscaping.

- d. The landscape plan to assure green space and landscaping along the Westminster streetscape to provide a landscaped entry into the single family neighborhoods to the north and east. Assure appropriate landscaping along the east side of the building and encourage cooperation with the two neighboring properties immediately to the east around removals of lower quality trees and vegetation if appropriate on the adjacent property and replanting with materials that will provide seasonal and year round screening.
 - e. The location and screening of the air conditioners and any other outdoor mechanical equipment to assure they are visually and acoustically screened.
 - f. The exterior lighting plan to assure that any exterior lighting is limited to that necessary for safety and security and that all exterior lighting is directed downward and the source of the light screened from view.
2. Direct continued cooperative efforts to underground the remaining overhead utility wires located off of, but near, the development site on the 333 Westminster site.
 3. Direct the petitioners, based on the Plan Commission's indication of support for the conceptual site plan, to proceed with preliminary engineering plans with specific attention to the drainage and grading plan to direct stormwater runoff away from neighboring properties to the east.
 4. Direct the petitioners to proceed with the preparation of the tentative Planned Development Plat for the overall site, the plat of vacation for the alley, easement documents as needed to establish public access to the roadways, sidewalk and green space, an overall landscape plan, a construction parking and staging plan and other documents that may be required prior to consideration of tentative approval.
 5. Direct staff, after the Historic Preservation Commission has completed its review and the other documents have been prepared and reviewed by staff, to return the petition to the Plan Commission for formal action on the tentative plat and a recommendation to the City Council.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dixon and was approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

5. Information Only: Comprehensive Plan Update -- Introduction and distribution of the draft of the Route 60 Entrance Corridor Chapter.

Chairman Kehr introduced the agenda item and asked the Commission to declare any conflicts of interest or Ex Parte contacts. Hearing none, she swore in all those intending to speak and invited a presentation by the City Staff.

Ms. Czerniak reviewed that earlier in the year, the Plan Commission held a public hearing and recommended approval of an update to the chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan relating to the Waukegan Road/Settler's Square Business District. She stated that the City Council, based on the Plan Commission's recommendation, approved the update to that chapter. She stated that a draft update to the chapter relating to the Route 60 Entrance Corridor is now presented to the Commission for public hearing and deliberation. She stated like the earlier chapter, a Working Group was appointed by the City Manager to serve as advisory to City staff and the City's consultant as an update to the chapter was drafted. She stated that to assist in moving the update to the Comprehensive Plan forward, and to provide an independent viewpoint, Teska Associates, Inc. was engaged by the City. She reviewed that a Comprehensive Plan is not a zoning document but instead, establishes a vision, describes desired outcomes and presents suggested actions to move the community toward the desired state. She stated that Lake Forest has a long history of careful planning and often has been at the forefront of creative ideas and initiatives rather than following the trend of the day. She stated that at this meeting, background information will be presented to the Commission starting with a review of the process to date. She stated that an in-depth review of the draft document, the vision and suggested actions is planned for the January Plan Commission meeting. She stated that this is the beginning of the Commission's consideration of this chapter adding that after this meeting, there will be additional opportunities for public comment. She recognized Jason Smith, the owner of the northwest portion of the Amberley Woods parcel, adding that several months ago, he presented a concept for his property to the Plan Commission. She noted that he has been an active participant in the update process to date and stated her appreciation for his patience as the community steps back to consider what type of land uses are in the best long term interests of the City as the few remaining parcels along Route 60 are considered for development. She introduced Scott Goldstein from Teska Associates, Inc. to provide an overview of the process to date, a summary of the input received and a high level market analysis. She noted that copies of the draft update to the chapter are available at the back of the room and on the City's website. She invited members of the public to review the document and submit questions and comments to City staff at any time prior to the January 8th meeting. She stated that public comment will be heard by the Commission at this meeting and also in January.

Mr. Goldstein noted that the focus of the study is the area along both sides of Route 60, between the Tollway and the railroad overpass, just east of Academy Drive. He added that the surrounding areas were also considered. He noted that the Route 60 Corridor is a major entrance to the City from the west. He stated that the Comprehensive Plan as it applies to this area was last updated in 2001 adding that much of what was envisioned in the Plan was achieved with the development of Conway Park and several nearby residential communities. He stated that the Working Group met five times and two community input sessions

were held. He added that he and his colleagues conducted numerous individual interviews with elected officials, representatives of businesses and institutions, residents and property owners and held several focus groups including one with real estate professionals. He stated that the Route 60 Corridor is a vibrant area and reviewed some of the comments received during the public process to date including interest in defining the area as an entrance into Lake Forest. He stated that there were many comments about continuing the legacy of high quality design of buildings and landscapes in the area. He noted that many commented that the setback along Route 60 was intentional while others noted that the open space did not clearly identify the area as the entrance to Lake Forest., He stated that there were comments in support of a trade-off that could allow a reduction in the setback in a limited area if a plan includes desired land uses and high quality development. He stated that there is a strong interest in preserving the legacy of the setback along Route 60 overall. He stated that there was significant interest in extension of the bicycle path west from the new bridge that was recently constructed over the railroad tracks. He stated that there is interest in providing amenities that are needed to keep the office park vibrant and a recognition that Conway Park is very different from the City's other business districts. He stated that a need was identified to offer businesses, housing and amenities that will attract younger people, couples, families and employees to Lake Forest. He stated that the discussions to date emphasized the importance of the existing preserved open spaces along the Route 60 Entrance Corridor including land owned by the City, Lake Forest Open Lands and the Forest Preserves District. He stated that there is interest in prioritizing sustainability as the final parcels in the area are developed. He stated that many people talked about the need for restaurants in the area noting that employees of the office park leave the area for lunch or a drink after work despite the fact that many of the office buildings have high quality cafeterias. He stated that employees and residents in the area want options. He stated that the Route 60 Corridor is ideally suited as a location for restaurants that will attract employees from the office park as well as those traveling through the area on Route 60 or on the Tollway. He stated that there is great interest in assuring that Conway Park remains a globally competitive location. He pointed out that recently, a number of corporate headquarters have moved from the suburbs into the City. He stated that Conway Park is successful, but noted that the type of amenities desired by employees and employers in office parks are different than they were 20 years ago. He noted that the existing sidewalks and walking paths in the area are currently well used but noted that no other amenities for employees exist beyond those features. He stated that amenities including restaurants and housing are needed in order for Conway Park to keep attracting world class office tenants. He stated that there were some big ideas such as locating destination cultural, recreational or sports related facilities in the area. He noted that uses such as a local home for the Lake Forest Symphony could potentially be accommodated in the area if private funding was to become available. He reviewed that the Comprehensive Plan is not regulatory but instead, identifies whether or not certain uses would be appropriate in the area and if so,

what limitations or opportunities exist. He stated that the need for high quality housing options, including rental housing, was identified to allow employees and others to experience Lake Forest before they decide where to buy a single family home. He reviewed that the two comments heard most frequently were the need to extend the bicycle path to the west and the need for restaurants in the area. He stated that extension of the bicycle path has been planned for many years to connect to the bicycle path on the bridge over the Tollway. He stated that there was general discussion about finding ways to reduce traffic congestion in the area by continuing to focus on improving access to the train stations. He noted that there may be a time in the future when due to changes in commuting habits, the expansive parking lots in Conway Park are not needed. He stated that there was some interest in providing the opportunity for parts of existing parking lots to be redeveloped with amenities for the office park. He stated that in preparation for the study, he looked at the City, the larger market area and the median incomes of Lake Forest residents and those in surrounding areas. He stated that the market area is strong and that the demand for goods and services is higher than the supply in the immediate area. He noted that statistics show that Lake Forest has a relatively low number of residents in the 25 to 44 age range. He noted that this is a concern because this age group often fuels the housing market. He noted that the Corridor may provide opportunities for housing types that may attract people in this age group who may be buying not a first unit, but a second unit. He stated that the same is true in other suburbs but the gap appears more prominent in Lake Forest. He noted that the market data suggests that there is an opportunity to attract the right types of restaurants and retail to this area to take advantage of the employee base and the Tollway interchange. He stated that the businesses that may locate in this area would be complementary to the businesses elsewhere in the City. He stated that no chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is being looked at in isolation. He added that there is an indication that the office market in northern Cook and Lake County is softening in comparison to the office market near O'Hare and in Chicago. He noted however, rental rates in the area have not changed. He stated that this information demonstrates that it is vitally important for the City of Lake Forest to continue efforts to keep Conway Park attractive to tenants and competitive with other office opportunities. He stated that Lake Forest can be at the top of the market by providing amenities that keep Conway Park highly desirable for both employers and employees. He reviewed a map of the Corridor and identified existing uses and sites with opportunities for development noting that each site will be discussed in more detail at the January meeting.

Chairman Kehr invited comments from staff.

Ms. Czerniak noted that the Commission has had the draft document since the meeting last month. She stated that in preparation for a full discussion of the draft in January, it would be helpful to hear from the Commission if there is additional information that is needed or questions. She asked that if anyone in attendance

did not receive a direct mailed notice of the hearing and would like to in the future, to please let her know.

Chairman Kehr invited questions from the Commission.

In response to questions from Commissioner Moorhead, Mr. Goldstein stated that data on online sales is available however, the reliability of that data is not certain. He stated that the data he presented focuses on market activity at bricks and mortar businesses.

In response to questions from Commissioner Moorhead, Ms. Czerniak stated that although Conway Farms Drive provides a connection between Everett Road and Route 60, it is purposefully circuitous to discourage cut through traffic to and from the office park.

In response to questions from Commissioner Moorhead, Mr. Goldstein stated that similar higher income suburbs that are located closer to the City are starting to see younger couples and families move in. He stated that the pattern of future housing preferences is hard to forecast but the general thinking is that those suburbs that are doing well, will increasingly attract younger families as the second child is born.

Commissioner Freeman requested that the slides from the presentation be provided to the Commission prior to the next meeting.

Chairman Kehr stated that she attended the community input sessions and was interested to hear how vitally important Conway Park is to the City of Lake Forest.

In response to questions from Chairman Kehr, Mr. Goldstein confirmed that Conway Park is important to Lake Forest not only in terms of the tax base, but also in terms of the land use. He pointed out that Conway Park brings many employees into Lake Forest and currently, after work, they all leave. He stated that there is interest from the employers and employees in seeing housing, restaurants, meeting spaces and hotels in the area. He noted that in his communications to date, it was clear that there is a good spirit of cooperation between the businesses, institutions and the City and an interest on the part of the various parties to be partners with the City and the community.

Chairman Kehr invited public comments.

Art Miller, 169 Wildwood Road, stated that during the earlier discussions about the Amberley Woods parcel there was considerable discussion about drainage. He stated that with the increased rainfall, consideration of drainage will be even more important. He stated that downstream impacts need to be considered before more impervious surface is added to the area.

Wayne Urbanek, 2025 Amberley Court, stated that he lives in the Amberley Woods development, directly south of the commercial property. He stated that development of that parcel will directly impact him. He noted that the existing house on the property owned by Jason Smith is designated as a Local Landmark and that there are many mature trees on the property. He stated that he understands that the current plan is to clear cut the property. He stated that clearcutting is not consistent with the character of Lake Forest. He endorsed the concept for a cul-de-sac at the west end of Amberley Court. He stated that the road is private and noted that currently, it is used as a cut-through by delivery trucks and employees of the office buildings. He encouraged construction of a high, well landscaped berm to buffer the residences from any future commercial development on the site owned by Mr. Smith. He noted that he was not aware of the discussions to date about the Route 60 Entrance Corridor and stated that he is available to talk with the consultant.

Keith Krebs, 1815 Amberley Court, agreed with Mr. Urbanek's comments. He cautioned that high end rental is successful in suburban areas only if the area is walkable and stores, restaurants and a train station are nearby. He stated that it may not be a good idea to locate rental housing in the area. He also expressed a concern that renters do not maintain properties as well as owners and the result could be an eyesore at the entrance to Lake Forest.

Greg Ewert, 225 Saunders Road, stated that his five acre property abuts the Amberley Woods development to the south. He stated that he attended many meetings pre-dating any development on the Amberley Woods parcel and heard many proposals for the site. He noted that it is interesting that in the past there was concern about the amount of traffic that could be generated by certain development schemes for the site but today, significant development on the site is being considered. He stated that reducing the setbacks along Route 60 is a concern and agreed that the area is not very walkable given that Route 60 is a four lane highway. He asked that the Commission keep an open mind to what other people think before moving in any particular direction.

Greg Amarantos, resident of Elderberry Court in Stonebridge, stated that he recently moved to Stonebridge but has lived in Lake Forest for 26 years and visited Lake Forest for 40 years. He stated that he respectfully disagrees that additional businesses in the area would create a traffic problem on Route 60. He noted that the community spent a significant amount of money to prevent McDonald's from locating on Waukegan Road because of the traffic it would bring. He stated that in his observation, the addition of the St. Mary's primary school to the area generated more traffic than McDonald's.

Chairman Kehr invited any further staff comments.

Ms. Czerniak stated that at the January 8th Plan Commission meeting, the entire meeting will be devoted to discussion of the proposed updates. She stated that based on the comments offered up to this point, it is not likely that any revisions will be made to the document before the January 8th meeting. She reminded the public that the draft document is available on the City's website.

Chairman Kehr invited final comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Dixon reiterated that any member of the public who does not have access to the document or would like to be included on the interested parties list should contact City staff.

Hearing no other comments from the Commission, Chairman Kehr invited a motion to continue the Commission's discussion at the next meeting.

Commissioner Dixon made a motion to continue consideration of the draft update to the chapter of the Comprehensive Plan relating to the Route 60 Corridor at the January 8, 2020 meeting.

5. Additional public comment on non-agenda items

There was no testimony presented on non-agenda items.

6. Additional information from staff.

The Commission approved the Plan Commission meeting calendar for 2020 with changes to the meeting dates in May and November as reflected on the schedule presented.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Czerniak
Director of Community Development