

The City of Lake Forest
Plan Commission
Proceedings of the February 13, 2019 Meeting - Revised

A meeting of the Lake Forest Plan Commission was held on Wednesday, February 13, 2019, at 6:30 p.m., at City Hall, 220 E. Deerpath, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Commission members present: Chairman Kehr and Commissioners Michael Freeman, Monica Ruggles, Guy Berg, Remo Picchietti, Stephen Douglass and Susan Athenson

Commissioners absent: None

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 January 9, 2019 Plan Commission meeting.

The minutes of the January 9, 2019 Plan Commission meeting were approved as submitted.

3. Public Hearing and Action: Consideration of a request for approval of the tentative and final plat of resubdivision and overall site plan for the second phase of the McKinley Road Redevelopment. The second phase of the development is proposed on property currently addressed as 711 McKinley Road and a portion of the property currently addressed as 697 McKinley Road. Property Owners/Contract Purchasers: 711 McKinley LLC (Todd Altounian 50%, Peter Witmer 50%), Church of the Covenants (697 McKinley Road)

Chairman Kehr asked the Commission to declare any conflicts of interest or Ex Parte contacts. Hearing none, she swore in all those intending to speak. She invited a presentation from the petitioner and asked that overview of the overall plan and some history of the project be provided.

Mr. Witmer introduced the petition noting that approval of the plat of subdivision for the second phase of the McKinley Road Redevelopment is requested. He stated that he is the project architect and a partner in the development company. He explained that along with his partners, he began acquiring and assembling property for the development four to five years ago. He stated that the first, and largest building in the development is completed. He noted that the first building is massed to appear as two smaller buildings. He stated that consistent with direction from the Plan Commission and City Council during the initial approvals of the project, negotiations were held with the Church of the Covenants about the possible

acquisition of a portion of the land on which the remaining single family home along this block of McKinley Road is located, to the south of the development site. He confirmed that an agreement with the Church was reached and after the house is demolished, the north 30 feet of the Church parcel will be incorporated into the development. He stated that the Church will retain the southern 20 feet of the parcel as part of the larger Church owned property which extends to Deerpath. He stated that the house will be demolished after the necessary approvals are secured. He noted that the Building Review Board determined that demolition of the house is appropriate based on the applicable criteria. He reviewed that at the start of the discussions with the Plan Commission, six or seven overall high level development concepts were considered along with various circulation routes for vehicles and pedestrians, general building locations and opportunities for green space. He stated that an overall Master Plan was ultimately approved by the City Council to guide planning as the project evolved. He noted that the Master Plan approval required, as part of a land swap with the City, the transfer of property to the Library site to provide the opportunity for additional parking spaces. He added that dedication of a public access easement on the private road and walkways and incorporation of a green space area were also required. He stated that the first building has worked out well along with the one-way circulation through the site with parallel parking available on one side of the street. He noted the location of the ramp to the underground parking for the second building. He commented on the massing of the first and second buildings in relation to each other and to other buildings in the Central Business District. He stated that the front elevation and architectural details of the second building will match the first building although the second building will be smaller than the first as it moves away from McKinley Road. He noted that on the south side, the second building tiers back to break up the massing. He stated that like the first building, all elevations of the second building will be detailed to the same level, essentially creating four building fronts. He reviewed the proposed plat of subdivision explaining that Outlot A will remain in the ownership of the Church and Outlot B will be transferred to the City and will become part of the Library site. He reviewed an overlay of the footprint of the existing office building and the proposed second condominium building. He stated that the building setback from the McKinley Road streetscape will match the first building. He stated that on the south side, the building is stepped back 19 feet from the proposed property line and is located approximately where the north wall of the existing house is located. He stated that the five foot setbacks are exceeded all along the south side of the building. He stated that the terraces are important for the first floor units. He stated that 17 parking spaces will be provided for the six units proposed in the second building. He stated that the overall development will also share the parking spaces along the street for guests. He reviewed the public pedestrian access provided through the site noting that a pedestrian connection is provided to the Library. He noted that the hardscape and landscape are intended to create a pedestrian friendly environment. He presented a rendering of the first building and a rendering of the two buildings together from various points of view.

Ms. Czerniak noted that the McKinley Road Redevelopment has been under discussion for several years. She stated that as early as 2014, discussions were initiated in part because the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society was considering various options for a long term location including adding on to the current building. She explained that at that time, the area east of McKinley Road, between Illinois Road and Westminster, was looked at as a "Cultural Corridor" with Gorton, the Library and the Historical Society all located there. She noted that as discussions progressed, and when it became clear that the Historical Society would be relocating out of the immediate area, a decision was made that as properties redeveloped in the area, uses should transition from office to multi-family residential to support the Central Business District. She added that the discussions concluded that redevelopment should happen with thought to the area comprehensively, rather than allow properties to develop incrementally. She noted that it was also acknowledged that City owned property, the property on the east extending from Westminster to the Library site, would be part of the redevelopment area. She stated that the approved Master Plan and the development that is now evolving in the area, are implementing that earlier vision. She stated that in 2016, the Commission held a number of meetings to consider an overall Master Plan for redevelopment of the area. She stated that at that time, Mr. Witmer presented a number of different approaches to redevelopment of the area and the Commission discussed the merits of each. She stated that as part of the City Council's negotiations with the developer regarding incorporating the City parcel into the development, it was required that an open green space area and some additional parking for the Library be provided as part of the plan. She explained that while the Historical Society occupied the building on the City property, Library staff and patrons were able to use some of the parking spaces on that property as overflow parking and that was lost when the building on the City property was demolished. She pointed out that Outlot B as configured, squares off the Library parcel and provides some breathing space behind the Library in what is currently an active area with the drive lane and book drop off. She noted that the Library is also engaged in planning for the future and the additional land provides some opportunity. She added that the Master Plan requires a pedestrian connection to the back of the Library. She stated that through the Master Planning process it was understood that the development would occur in phases, to allow an assessment of the demand for specific types of housing units given not only this development, but also the new residential development at Laurel and Western Avenues, and to assure that too much of a particular product was not being developed. She stated that the second building is designed consistent with the first building adding that the same exterior materials will be used. She stated that the design of the first building was considered by the Building Review Board over the course of several meetings and discussed during that time more in depth by a subcommittee of the Board. She stated that the Building Review Board recently reviewed the design aspects of the second building to confirm its consistency with the first building. She stated that the official action requested from the Plan Commission at this point in the process is approval of a plat of subdivision to establish the parcel on which the second building will be built and create two outlots. She reviewed that Outlot A will be

donated back to the Church in accordance with the contract reached by the Church representatives and the developer. She stated that Outlot B will be transferred to the City and will be part of the Library parcel.

Chairman Kehr invited questions from the Commission to the petitioner or staff.

In response to questions from Commissioner Athenson, Mr. Witmer reviewed how each parcel in the proposed subdivision will be used. He confirmed that Outlot A will remain in the ownership of the Church and will be consolidated with the larger Church property. He confirmed that Outlot B, in accordance with the earlier agreement, will be transferred to the City and will be incorporated into the Library site. He confirmed that the later phases of the project are proposed for property that is currently owned by the City adding that there is a Purchase, Sale Agreement in place between the City and the developer for that land. He explained that the agreement requires that the developer provide an open space area and transfer property to the City to provide additional parking for the Library.

In response to questions from Commissioner Athenson, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that a Purchase, Sale Agreement is in place for the property on which phase three of the development is planned. She stated that the intended use for that parcel is residential recognizing that the design of that phase will need to provide a transition to the adjacent single family residential properties. She confirmed that discussions of a phase 3 site plan will occur at the Plan Commission prior to any consideration of phase three buildings by the Building Review Board. She acknowledged that the Master Plan did not specifically include the northern portion of the City property in the anticipated development, but identified it as a single family residence or duplex, because at that time, the negotiations with the developer only focused on the southern portion. She noted however that the City Council determined, as negotiations moved forward, that incorporating that parcel, rather than leaving it as a stand-alone parcel, would provide the opportunity to look at the later phase more comprehensively.

In response to questions from Commissioner Athenson, Mr. Witmer stated that the required side yard setback in this zoning district is five feet and the front yard setback is 25 feet. He confirmed that the required setbacks are met. He confirmed that the building design was approved by the Building Review Board including the roof top space.

In response to questions from Commissioner Ruggles, Ms. Czerniak stated that the lot currently owned by the Church, on which the single family residence is located at 697 McKinley Road, is 50' wide. She stated that it is her understanding that there is a contract in place for the sale of that lot to the developer with the stipulation that the southern 20 feet of the parcel will be donated back to the Church for incorporation into the larger Church parcel. She confirmed that the City parcel, along the east side of the development, is also under contract with the developer with the stipulations that a small green space be incorporated into the new

development at the rear of the Library and an area of land, at the southeast corner of the 711 McKinley Road property, will be transferred to the City for incorporation into the Library site to provide the opportunity for additional parking or improved circulation.

Commissioner Berg noted that in early discussions, the Commission discouraged the developer from crowding the rear elevation of the Library by locating a building immediately behind the Library. He stated that it was suggested that green space be provided instead. He stated that in his opinion, the plan presented by the developer is sensitive to that earlier concern. He noted that perhaps sometime in the future there may be a rear entrance to the Library taking advantage of some additional green space in that area. He added that in earlier discussions, the Commission recommended that buildings in the later phases of the new development, located on the eastern parcel, step down in scale to be sensitive to the single family homes to the east.

Commissioner Freeman noted that his recollection is that there was concern about the size of the open space when the Master Plan was being discussed. He stated that the open space as now presented appears small and suggested that rather than building out the additional parking spaces for the Library on Outlot B in the short term, the area could be land banked and retained as part of the open space area until a need for additional parking is demonstrated or until an updated overall plan for the Library is developed. He expressed concern about the proposed six foot tall wood fence around the parking spaces noting that it will interrupt the visual corridor. He stated that his memory is that there was interest in not only making this area an inviting pedestrian corridor, but also to provide visual flow through the area. He noted however that by creating the eight parking spaces for the Library, an opportunity is lost to enlarge the green space. He noted that the residents in the new development will have the benefit of views of important historic structures, the train station and the Library, and the wood fence and additional parking seems to run counter to that benefit. He commented that the development represents a great partnership between the City, the developer, the Church and the other neighbors.

In response to questions from Commissioner Freeman, Ms. Czerniak stated that she understands that the Library would like the additional parking spaces tomorrow. She acknowledged that the Library is going through its own planning process and that further thought could be given to the issue.

Commissioner Freeman stated that eight parking spaces is not going to solve the Library's parking issue. He suggested instead that a pedestrian corridor from the train station could create the corridor as envisioned by the Master Plan and provide access to the Library from off-site parking lots while preserving open space at the same time.

Commissioner Athenson stated that she is intrigued by the concept of the Cultural Corridor. She stated that the original recommendations from the Commission contemplated a mix of two story and two and a half story buildings to take advantage of views through the corridor. She stated that the buildings appear higher than originally anticipated and the open space, smaller. She stated that the plan as proposed land locks the Library. She stated that the development appears to place a burden on the neighbors to the east and does not seem to be consistent with the approved Master Plan.

Ms. Czerniak commented that the development plan as it is evolving to this point, is generally consistent with the concepts presented in the approved Master Plan. She acknowledged that the building or buildings in the later phase will need to provide a transition to the single family homes to the east and north.

Commissioner Ruggles noted that in looking at the Master Plan, there was a thought that the north end of the later phase would be a single family home and as a result, add a sense of more open space to the area. She expressed concern that the later phase may be a single long building on the east parcel. She observed that the building now proposed appears to have a larger footprint than anticipated by the Master Plan and as a result, the site appears more crowded than may have been expected. She suggested consideration of use of the southern portion of the east parcel in configuring the open space area and the Library parking. She stated that if the property is eventually going to be part of the development, thinking of how it could contribute to easing a feeling of crowding on the site is reasonable.

Commissioner Berg stated that the increased width of the second building, made possible by acquiring a portion of the Church property, benefits the project. He added that the reduced massing of the building as it turns the corner and moves to the east is an enhancement over a building with a solid mass given the views of the south elevation of the building from the streetscape. He said that the model is very helpful to see the proposed building in the context of the larger area.

In response to a question from Commissioner Douglass, Ms. Czerniak stated that the Master Plan did not contemplate acquisition of a portion of the Church property because at that time, the Church indicated an interest in retaining ownership and maintaining the house. She stated however that the City Council encouraged continued discussions between the developer and the Church in an effort to reach the best solution for the long term.

In response to questions from Commissioner Berg, Mr. Witmer acknowledged that the roof of the penthouse slopes slightly from north to south for drainage purposes. He agreed to work to mitigate that condition on the second building.

In response to questions from Commissioner Athenson, Ms. Czerniak acknowledged that the Library is in the midst of its own planning process. She stated that further discussions can be held to see if there is an opportunity to leave the area

designated for parking as open space for now. She also suggested that the parking spaces could be installed and, depending on plans developed by the Library in the future, removed or reconfigured if appropriate at a later date. She stated that the plan for the second phase of the development is generally consistent with the approved Master Plan.

In response to questions from Chairman Kehr, Mr. Witmer stated that the phase two building is 9,000 square feet per floor, three floors and the first building totals 16,000 square feet per floor, three floors. He confirmed that the second building will be the same width across the McKinley Road frontage as the recently completed phase one building. He explained that the 11 market rate units in the first building were “white boxed” and customized for the individual buyers. He added that two affordable units are incorporated into the first building to meet the City’s Inclusionary Housing requirement for the first two buildings. He stated that floor plans of the proposed second building are available and can be provided to the Commission noting however that some modification of the interior layout will likely occur during buildout, at the request of buyers. He confirmed that the first building is completely sold and 80 percent of the units are occupied. He stated that like the first building, the units in the second building will be white boxed providing the opportunity for buyers to customize the units. He stated that the top floor of the second building is planned as a single unit to meet the needs of the buyer. He confirmed that in the future, if desired, the top floor could be reconfigured into two units. He reviewed the floor plans pointing out the elevators which open directly into the units, with no lobby space on each floor. He noted that the units in the development as constructed and planned to date range in size from 8,000 square feet to 1,800 square feet.

Chairman Kehr noted that an air photo of the larger area, showing the proposed building in relation to the Church and the Library, would be helpful. She expressed concern over how the Owners’ Association for the condominium building will be managed with a single owner controlling a large portion of the square footage.

In response to questions from Chairman Kehr, Mr. Witmer confirmed that the private road that extends through the development, from McKinley Road to Westminster, is plowed by a private entity hired by the Master Association. He confirmed that the Master Association for the entire development will be responsible for the private road and green space. He confirmed that in addition to the Master Association, each building will have its own association. He reviewed the dimensions of the green space and the separation between the buildings in comparison to Regent’s Row. He agreed to present information on sun and shadows in relation to the green space. He agreed to look further into fencing at the ramp to the garage noting that the Code requirements will be met and to reconsider the type of fencing proposed along the property line shared with the Library.

Chairman Kehr observed that the one-way road through the site appears to work well. She stated that the proposed density alone may not be a good measure of

the development and encouraged consideration of the incorporation of some one and two bedroom units in the later phases.

In response to questions from Chairman Kehr, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that both engineering and public safety staff are involved in review and approval of the plans on an ongoing basis.

In response to questions from Chairman Kehr, Mr. Witmer acknowledged the impacts of the construction on the Donovans. He stated that at the request of the City Engineer, as soon as the weather permits, a temporary swale will be installed along the east property line, generally adjacent to the Donovans' property. He stated that he is confident that as construction of the second phase gets underway, the crews can do a better job of mitigating the impacts on the neighboring properties.

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

Doug Donovan, 373 E. Westminster, stated that his house is immediately east of the current construction staging area for the project, the area that will ultimately be developed as a later phase of the project. He said that he submitted a letter to the Commission detailing the day to day impacts on his property as a result of the construction activity. He stated that from a broader perspective, he is interested in understanding the overall development plan. He stated that his last substantive discussion about the development with the developer and staff was in May, 2017. He stated that he has previously expressed interest in how the master plan was arrived at and how it would progress. He stated his expectation that he would be proactively contacted throughout the process to provide the opportunity for ongoing discussions about what was happening around his property. He reiterated that the construction staging area is adjacent to his property. He noted that he was present for the substantive discussions of the Plan Commission in 2016 but noted that the project has evolved pointing out the developer's plans to now purchase some property from the Church. He asked the Commission not to approve the phase two plan until further discussions are held on traffic, drainage and the impacts of the construction on his daily life.

Hearing no further requests to speak from members of the public, Chairman Kehr invited further questions and comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Athenson acknowledged that she is just stepping into this project having only recently joined the Commission. She noted that her first impression is that the phase two plan departs from the previously approved Master Plan. She noted that the building is larger than reflected on the plan and the open space is smaller. She stated that, in her opinion, there is too much density planned for the overall area which will have a negative impact on the area. She stated that her understanding is that the Cultural Corridor concept was to continue the tradition of

Market Square. She stated that luxury living units do not compliment the Library or the Church adding that the area needs a diversity of housing products including more affordable housing. She stated that there is not yet a development plan available yet for the later phases of the development planned for the area. She encouraged consideration of a plan that allows the Library to have more visibility, and a plan that has less impact on the neighbors. She stated that she is disappointed with the architectural design of the building noting that it dominates the Church and the Library structures and changes the character of the area to more of a renovated warehouse appearance and changes the appearance of the McKinley Road streetscape. She noted that the proposed building is three stories, rather than two, and has roof top space creating a fourth floor area. She stated that a development on the order of Regent's Row may be a good option for the area because of its architectural design and two and a half story height. She noted that the house on the Church property is one of the original homes constructed near the Central Business District. She stated that demolition of the home will change the character of McKinley Road. She encouraged the developer to be sensitive to the surrounding historic buildings.

In response to questions from Chairman Kehr, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that notice of the Commission's meeting was mailed to residents in the surrounding area.

Commissioner Berg pointed out that the footprint of the second building does not significantly differ from the conceptual footprint reflected in the Master Plan pointing out that the building is slightly longer east to west than reflected and wider, taking advantage of the ability to acquire part of the Church property for the betterment of the project. He stated that he is a proponent of creating an integrated development at this location and incorporating open space. He recalled that in the earlier discussions, the Library representatives were most concerned about parking and logistics as opposed to how open space in the area might benefit the Library. He stated that the open space as envisioned is not necessarily intended to be a large expanse with significant sun exposure but instead, to avoid a three story building being located directly behind the Library. He stated that in his opinion, the plan as presented does not deviate significantly from the approved Master Plan. He pointed out that in comparison to the prior office buildings, the proposed residential development is low impact from a parking and traffic perspective. He stated that he was surprised to learn of the demand for luxury units in this area adding that the location of new units, near the Central Business District is clearly attractive to people. He noted that the density as the site is evolving is less than originally anticipated and less than is found in other areas of the community. He noted that smaller units are available at the north end of the Central Business District, in the Laurel and Western Avenues development. He stated support for the development plan as presented.

Commissioner Freeman stated that he was on the Commission at the time the Master Plan and the first phase of the project were considered. He stated that he agrees with Commissioner Berg's comments in general and appreciates the

foresight in trying to create an overall vision for this area. He stated that he had reservations at the time the Master Plan was considered by the Commission that the open space was too small and noted some conversations about trying to mirror Market Square. He stated however, that the property must be recognized for the limitations that exist. He stated that it is his understanding that the Master Plan generally established conceptual footprints for the buildings, density parameters and the requirement for green space. He noted however that by not revisiting the Master Plan when additional property was acquired, there may now be a temptation to discard the approved Master Plan and start over. He noted however that the developer invested money based on the concepts in the Master Plan. He stated however that given the evolution that has occurred since the original approval of the Master Plan, it will be beneficial to have a broader discussion about phase 3 before planning for that area gets underway. He stated that in his opinion, it is odd to develop the site a building at a time. He commended the Church for being a good neighbor and for being willing to work toward a solution for the overall good of the community. He acknowledged that during the earlier public hearings on this development, representatives of the Church spoke openly and were engaged in the process. He commented on the additional sightlines of the development that will be present in the absence of the house and added that with the additional property, the front elevations of the two buildings will mirror each other. He stated that the previous office buildings in this area were unattractive and did not serve the community well. He stated that he supports the overall development but reiterated that the Commission should have a fuller discussion about the later phase of the development. He acknowledged that during the earlier discussion, Library representatives expressed concern parking. He stated that his recollection is that there was discussion around how to create a pedestrian walkway to the Library from the train station. He stated that the Commission needs to see the whole plan. He acknowledged that in early discussions the latter phase was talked about as possibility a series of townhomes with a single family home or a duplex on the Westminster streetscape. He stated that the development of the last phase could provide an opportunity for an extension of the green space or the incorporation of a fountain or some other visual element. He noted the need to provide a visual tie in to the east end of the private road as initially discussed. He acknowledged that the roadway locations and the general location of the green space are set. He encouraged more thought about a pedestrian connection between the train station and the Library. He noted that the Library has a beautiful front lawn and commented that perhaps a similar experience could be offered on the north side of the Library. He asked that a study be done and be presented to the Commission on ways to highlight the east/west and north/south views from and to the train station and the Library rotunda and to highlight the pedestrian connections through the area as originally envisioned. He stated that his intent is not to overburden the developer noting this project should be treated the same as other projects and he fears it has not been. He stated that his intent is not to throw out the Master Plan, but to take a step back recognizing that additional property has been added to the phase three area, to further study the later phase and to work with the developer and Library on making the most of the open space. He

stated that three story buildings in the first two phases are consistent with what was envisioned in the early discussions. He stated that he is troubled by the fencing along the Library and Church properties commenting that his sense is that there may be opportunities to provide for improved visual sightlines. He stated that although the project is a great example of a cooperative effort, he agrees with Mr. Donovan that the Commission needs to see a full plan for the site and adhere to the guidance provided by the Master Plan.

Ms. Czerniak stated that the overall Master Plan can be brought back to the Commission for an update and further discussion taking into account the work completed to date and the expanded boundaries of the development area. She stated that establishing updated parameters for the third phase is appropriate before the developer begins work in earnest on that part of the plan. She reiterated that a Master Plan is not a mandate, but is intended to establish parameters for development and serve as a guide in reviewing detailed plans.

Commissioner Freeman stated that he is comfortable that the building footprint is generally consistent with the Master Plan recognizing that the Master Plan allows for some flexibility. He noted however that by widening the second building, the open space appears smaller. He stated disappointment that there has not been discussions with the Library on the possibility of land banking the land identified for parking or better yet, designating it for open space. He stated that with respect to the large unit proposed in the phase two building, the unit can be divided into two smaller units in the future if buyers desire smaller units. He stated that he wants to give the developer the chance to succeed, he noted that there is clearly a demand for the type of units being constructed. He stated that his hope is that the City and the Library can work to resolve the parking issue and that further exploration can be done to configure a walkway that leads directly to the open space.

Commissioner Picchietti stated that he is at a disadvantage since he was not on the Commission during the earlier discussions and is unclear what the Commission charge is at this point in the process. He stated support for moving forward with the second phase of the project with the caveat that the Commission have an overall discussion of the later phase, in the context of the earlier phases and the surrounding neighborhood, before a specific plan is prepared by the developer for that phase. He stated however that it is not appropriate for the Commission to go back and revise the fundamental concepts that were approved as part of the earlier discussions.

Chairman Kehr stated support for the addition of land from the Church property noting that it allows the proportions of the second building to be improved and better relate to the first building which was beautifully done. She stated however that additional information as discussed by the Commission is needed. She suggested that the matter be continued to allow the petitioner and staff to provide

additional information and respond to the points raised by the Commission. She asked the Commission for thoughts on the later phases of the project.

Commissioner Douglass acknowledged that he does not have the benefit of the earlier discussions but acknowledged that at the time additional property was added to the development site from the Church property, further Commission review would have been ideal. He stated that he is supportive of the overall site plan for phase two and the final plat of subdivision subject to some further consideration of the configuration of the open space and perhaps discussion of the Library parking.

Commissioner Freeman stated that the site plan, siting of the building and configuration of the open space are under the Plan Commission's review. He acknowledged that the design aspects of the building and the exterior materials were reviewed and approved by the Building Review Board and found to be consistent with the approvals for the first building.

Commissioner Ruggles stated that she sees an opportunity to use the southern portion of the third phase parcel to incorporate some additional open space to benefit the development and the Library. She stated that now that the north end of the City property is part of the development site, there is some further flexibility and the opportunity to ease some concerns expressed by the Commission. She stated support for the second building pointing out that the south elevation of the building as now proposed relates to the Church and in effect forms a courtyard between the building and the Church. She stated that the relationships of the building, open space and neighboring building present thoughtful urban design particularly on the south and east sides. She stated support for how the green space connects to the Library. She stated that she would like to see more of the same as plans are developed for the eastern portion of the site.

Chairman Kehr stated that she has many unanswered questions and a concern that the open space is smaller than anticipated. She requested that additional information be presented to the Commission in response to the questions raised and the comments. She added that she has safety concerns about the ramp to the garage.

Commissioner Freeman asked that clarification be provided on the requirements to safe guard the ramp. He asked that further consideration be given to the parking for the Library. He stated that the Church property provides the opportunity to make this a more walkable development.

Commissioner Berg noted that the phase three building needs to provide a visual terminus to the road. He cautioned that an open space in that area will create a void. He stated that an architectural feature on a building will provide a visual anchor to the street off of McKinley Road to draw people into the development and through to the open space and Library.

In response to comments from the Commission, Mr. Witmer stated that he is comfortable with how the phase two building and the related open space has evolved. He stated that at this time, the approach to the later phase has not yet taken shape and likely will not have a clear direction until the second phase is well underway. He stated that he is sensitive to the neighbors' concerns about the impacts of construction and will work to minimize the impacts to the extent possible. He stated that in designing the housing product type, as a developer, he needs to be aware and responsive to what buyers want in a product, at this location. He stated that the project has been successful to date because it responds to what people want. He stated that his goal is to achieve a project that is a win for all parties. He acknowledged the points made by the Commission and agreed to give further consideration to the questions and concerns raised. He stated that with respect to the phase three building, visibility of that building from McKinley Road is critical. He stated that the process of assembling land and planning for a consolidated development on this site has been complicated adding that he and his partner have been working on this project for years. He stated that in accordance with the early direction, the plan incorporates green space, public pedestrian access through the site and additional parking for the Library. He agreed that a larger open space would be better but reiterated that there is a requirement to provide space for additional parking for the Library. He noted however that the green space as configured provides some breathing space for the Library, provides for a spacious pedestrian connection through the development to the Library and opens up sightlines for the new residents in the development. He stated that the green space is a good component of the development. He acknowledged that how the later phase is developed will have an impact on the residential properties to the east and north, and on the Westminster streetscape. He noted however that a specific plan is not yet developed for the later phase adding that the plan will be guided by the success of the first two phases and market demand. He stated that the first phase of the development has been successful by providing a product that allows long time Lake Forest residents to stay in the community because the product meets their needs and interests. He stated that making some larger condominiums available near the Central Business District is a benefit because the residents will patronize stores and restaurants in the area. He stated that the development is adding vitality to the Central Business District and strengthening the customer base. He stated that he and others are excited about how the project is developing, offering a mix of large and smaller units. He stated that the Commission needs to understand that the Master Plan was to be used as a guide and not to mandate a specific building foot print or configuration of green space. He stated that they were directed to negotiate with the Church to explore a long term resolution for the McKinley Road streetscape and over the course of several months, the negotiations were pursued ultimately resulting in some modification to the second phase. He said that the efforts to date to improve the project have had economic implications on him, as the developer and he reiterated that before preparing detailed plans for the later

phase, the second phase needs to begin to take shape and the level of interest in the units assessed.

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

Commissioner Freeman made a motion to continue consideration of the petition to allow the petitioner and staff to provide additional information on the alignment of phase 2 as now proposed with the previously approved Master Plan, to respond to the questions raised by the Commission and to establish a framework for further discussion about phase three prior to a detailed plan for that area being presented to the Commission.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Athenson and approved by a vote of 6 to 1 with Commissioner Picchietti voting nay.

Commissioner Picchietti stated that he supports moving the petition forward given the general conformance with the approved Master Plan and a commitment that the Commission will have further discussions before a detailed plan is presented for the later phase of the development.

4. Additional public comment on non-agenda items

There was no testimony presented on non-agenda items.

5. Additional information from staff.

No additional information was presented by staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Czerniak
Director of Community Development