

The City of Lake Forest
Plan Commission
Proceedings of the June 20, 2019 Meeting
(re-scheduled from June 13, 2019)

A meeting of the Lake Forest Plan Commission was held on Thursday, June 20, 2019, at 6:30 p.m., at City Hall, 220 E. Deerpath, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Commission members present: Chairman Kehr and Commissioners Monica Ruggles, Stephen Douglass and John Dixon

Commissioners absent: Commissioners Remo Picchietti, Susan Athenson and Michael Freeman

Staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development

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

Chairman Kehr reviewed the meeting procedures followed by the Commission. She welcomed John Dixon, the newly appointed Commissioner. She asked the members of the Commission and staff to introduce themselves.

2. Consideration of the minutes of the March 13, 2019 and April 10, 2019 Plan Commission meetings.

The minutes of the March 13, 2019 Plan Commission meeting were approved with corrections as requested by Commissioners Douglass, Freeman and Chairman Kehr.

The minutes of the April 10, 2019 Plan Commission meeting were approved with corrections as requested by Chairman Kehr.

3. Recognition of Guy Berg for his service to the City of Lake Forest as a member of the Plan Commission.

This item agenda item was postponed.

4. Public Hearing and Action: Consideration of request for approval of the Mayflower Ravine Planned Preservation Resubdivision plat and the associated Special Use Permit. No additional lots are proposed. The resubdivision proposes to reconfigure three existing lots to facilitate protection and restoration of the ravine. The resubdivision involves: 900 and 990 Illinois Road, and 207 Maple Court.

Property Owners: Roger and Sandra Deromedi (900 Illinois Road), Andrew and Ruth Winick (990 Illinois Road) and Dennis Johnston (207 Maple Court)

Representative: Roger Deromedi

Chairman Kehr asked the Commission for any conflicts of interest or Ex Parte contacts. Hearing none, she sworn in all those planning to speak on this agenda item and invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Deromedi introduced the petition and the owners of the properties involved in the proposed subdivision, all longtime residents of Lake Forest. He stated that he and his wife have lived at 990 Illinois Road since 2004, Andrew and Ruth Winick at 990 Illinois Road since 2005, and Dennis Johnston at 207 Maple Court since 1997. He stated that tentative final approval of the plat for the Mayflower Ravine Subdivision is requested along with approval of the associated Special Use Permit. He explained that since the properties are located in the Historic Residential Open Space Preservation Overlay District, the subdivision must be approved through a Special Use Permit. He stated that the proposed subdivision is a reconfiguration of the three lots pointing out that no additional lots are proposed as part of the subdivision. He stated that the purpose of the proposed subdivision is to locate more of the ravine on one property to preserve and protect it. He stated that the subdivision does not propose any additional density and no new development is planned. He reviewed a map pointing out the properties involved and the existing and proposed configuration of each. He stated that all three lots are in the R-4 zoning district which today requires a 60,000 square foot minimum lot size. He stated that importantly, all of the lots were established long before the current zoning. He stated that each lot has significant acreage within the Mayflower Ravine. He stated that currently, the 900 Illinois property totals four acres and the 990 Illinois Road property totals 3.19, both significantly exceeding the minimum lot size. He stated that the 207 Maple Court property is .0936 acres, smaller than the current minimum lot size however, because it was established prior to the current zoning requirements, it is a legal nonconforming lot. He provided a history of each property. He stated that his property, 900 Illinois Road, was built by commodities trader Henry Rumsey in 1912. He noted that Mr. Rumsey was the Mayor of Lake Forest from 1919 to 1926. He noted that the house was designed by Charles Coolidge who also designed Stanford University, the Chicago Art Institute and the Chicago Public Library which today is the Cultural Center. He stated that the Rumsey property, originally eight acres, was subdivided in the 1950's creating some of the surrounding properties. He stated that the Winick's house, at 990 Illinois Road, was the last house designed by James Gamble Rogers and was built in 1926. He added that Rogers also designed homes for the Farwell family and A.B. Dick as well as the original Gorton School. He stated that originally, the 990 Illinois house sat on a 4.2 acre parcel. He stated that the property was subdivided in 1986, into a 3.19 acre parcel on which the house sits today, and a 1.1 acre parcel which was recently developed with a new home. He noted that much of the acreage of the 990 parcel is on the north side of the Mayflower Ravine and is not accessible from the property on the south side of the ravine, where the house is located. He noted that the property on the north side of the ravine is the property that is proposed to be transferred to his property. He noted that the Johnston property at 207 Maple Court was created as part of the 1953 subdivision of the 900 Illinois Road property. He pointed out that in that subdivision, the property lines did not follow the stream

bed of the ravine creating the unusual lot configurations that exist today. He stated that the Johnston's house was the original gardener's lodge for the 900 Illinois residence. He stated that the gardener's cottage was moved from 211 Maple Court, to 207 Maple Court in the 1950's and has since been significantly renovated since that time. He explained that the entire area was part of the original 900 Illinois Road property with gardens designed by Jens Jensen, a renowned landscape architect. He presented an image of the original landscape plan dated January, 1913. He stated that the ravine was an important aspect of the original landscape design with trails and bridges throughout the ravine. He pointed out that the 211 and 207 Maple Court properties which were originally part of the 900 Illinois Road property. He noted that from 2007 to 2017, he undertook an extensive restoration of the portion of the Mayflower Ravine located on his property. He commented that like most ravines, the ravine was scoured and deteriorated. He stated that the restoration work included stabilization and naturalization to return the ravine to the Jens Jensen plan. He stated that he brought in 10 million pounds of rock and 40,000 trees and plants as part of the project and showed before and after photos of the ravine. He stated that the result of the subdivision is that more of the ravine will be added to his property, 900 Illinois Road. He stated that the expectation is that the owner of the largest property will be a good steward of the ravine; protecting it with stabilization and restoration as needed and importantly, conducting ongoing maintenance. He stated that the subdivision is consistent with the purpose of the overlay zoning district which encourages subdivisions to be configured creatively to preserve natural features. He stated that in 2015, he appeared before the Commission with a similar subdivision involving the properties upstream on the ravine and as a result, portions of property within the ravine were transferred into his ownership. He identified the land that will be added to his property from the Winicks and the land that will be swapped with the Johnstons. He noted that the land that will be added to the Johnston's property will increase the table land and will locate the property line between the two properties down the middle of the stream bed. He stated that after the subdivision, the 900 and 990 Illinois Road properties will both exceed the minimum lot size, as they do now, and the acreage of the Johnston property will remain unchanged. He presented the plat of subdivision reflecting the proposed lot configuration and reiterating that most of the ravine stream bed will be part of the 900 Illinois Road property. He noted that each lot will own the edge of the table land and the slope. He summarized that no new lots will be created, the density will not be increased, and no change is planned to any of the homes. He stated that each of the lots will still meet the minimum requirement for the amount of table land. He stated that the proposed subdivision is requested by the owners of all three properties for the purpose of preserving and protecting the ravine.

Ms. Czerniak confirmed that the purpose of the subdivision is to protect and preserve the ravine. She confirmed that the proposed subdivision will not result in an increase in density or additional development on any of the three properties involved in the subdivision. She noted that the purpose of the proposed subdivision, to preserve the ravine, is consistent with the purpose of the subdivision that was approved in 2015 for properties upstream from the current site. She stated that a

recommendation in support of the subdivision as proposed is included in the staff report.

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

Tom Swarthout, 987 Maplewood Road, stated that his property is adjacent to the ravine that will be protected through the subdivision. He stated strong support for the subdivision noting that over the years, he and his wife have been the beneficiaries of the ravine restoration that has been completed to date by Mr. Deromedi. He stated that Mr. Deromedi has done a spectacular job preserving and protecting the ravine and pointed out that he has done much of the work himself. He stated that he is overwhelmed with the progress made to date in restoring the ravine. He stated that he is extremely fortunate to be a neighbor and a friend of all three of the property owners involved. He stated strong support for the project.

Kurt Thorsen, 210 Maple Court, stated that he thought this subdivision affected property adjacent to his property but noted that he now understands that the affected area is not adjacent to his property. He stated support for the work completed to date in the ravine. He noted that recently, some earth work has occurred in an area adjacent to his property and it appeared to increase the amount of stormwater reaching the eastern side of his property, near the end of the cul-de-sac. He stated that he is trying to figure out which neighbor did the work and questioned whether a permit had been obtained. He stated that the work was done about a month or a month and a half ago.

Chairman Kehr encouraged Mr. Thorsen to talk with the neighbors and City staff.

Mr. Deromedi stated that he has not done any earth work adjacent to Mr. Thorsen's property.

Hearing no further requests to speak from the public, Chairman Kehr stated that the City is very grateful for the work Mr. Deromedi has done and plans to do. Hearing no further questions or comments from the Commission, she invited a motion.

Commissioner Dixon made a motion to recommend tentative and final approval of the plat of subdivision as presented to the City Council.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ruggles and was approved by a 4 to 0 vote.

5. Public Hearing and Action: Consideration of a request for approval of a subdivision to allow each unit of the duplex and the associated yard areas to be held in separate ownership. The properties are addressed as 279 Scott Street and 931 McKinley Road.

Property Owner and Representative: Weidenhamer Family Trust (Joseph Weidenhamer, 100%)

Chairman Kehr asked the Commission for any conflicts of interest or Ex Parte contacts. Hearing none, she sworn in all those planning to speak on this agenda item and invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Weidenhamer introduced the petition and requested approval of the final plat of subdivision for his duplex development. He reviewed some of the history of the property noting that the property was created in 1861 through the SF Miller Subdivision. He stated that in 1924, the Sutton family purchased the property and members of the family resided in the home until two years ago. He noted that the property went through several changes in configuration over the years up until 1950. He stated that when he purchased the property in 2017, it was unchanged from 1950. He stated that after purchasing the property he met early on with City staff to discuss zoning, massing, architectural style and the character of the area. He stated that after those discussions, he decided that redeveloping the property with two attached single family homes was the right approach. He noted that after researching the property, he developed a sense of stewardship and was committed to seeing that the property was developed in a way that supported revitalization of the Scott Street neighborhood, an area where little redevelopment has occurred in recent years. He stated that his goal is to create a needed housing type that is consistent with the character of the neighborhood and the City's Central Business District. He stated his hope that his development helps to increase property values in the area. He stated that construction of two attached units, designed in a French Country style, is underway with exterior building materials and architectural detailing that conform to other homes in the area and with the new development occurring around the Central Business District. He noted that the property is in a unique location, in a transition area between the larger multi-family development occurring to the south, and the established single family home neighborhoods. He stated that in 2018, he received approval for setback variances to allow the construction that is now underway. He stated that now that the foot print of the building is established, Anderson Engineering recently re-surveyed the property to verify that the construction conforms to the approved setbacks and prepared the final plat of subdivision in conformance with the variances granted. He reviewed the landscape plan noting that the garage for the unit fronting on McKinley Road is close to the road. He pointed out that in response to earlier comments, an area was added to allow a vehicle backing out of the garage to turn around on the site to avoid backing out on to McKinley Road. He stated that the driveway apron is brick and the driveway itself is bordered by two rows of soldier course brick pavers set at a higher elevation than the center area, to retain the crushed stone. He stated that the design is intended to keep the crushed stone off of McKinley Road.

Ms. Czerniak stated that the property is unique and as a result, the review process was a bit convoluted. She thanked the petitioner for his patience. She stated that the Plan Commission approved the tentative plat of subdivision last April with direction to return with the final plat after the house was constructed to allow verification of the setbacks. She stated that the building was constructed in conformance with the setbacks as approved and as reflected on the final plat. She

reminded the Commission that like all of the properties on the east side of McKinley Road, this property was fore-shortened when McKinley Road was widened and shifted to the east, away from the railroad tracks. As a result, many of the properties on the east side of McKinley Road are not in conformance with today's zoning requirements. She stated that the petitioner desires to allow each unit and the surrounding yard area to be sold into separate ownership and to do so, the property must be subdivided. She stated that there will not be any common or limited common areas. She stated that the staff report recommends approval of the final plat of subdivision.

Chairman Kehr invited questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Ruggles stated that the staff analysis and the petitioner's presentation adequately answered her questions.

Commissioner Dixon agreed with Commissioner Ruggles.

Commissioner Douglass noted that he was not on the Commission when this matter came before the Commission for tentative plat approval. He noted however that the request appears logical.

In response to questions from Chairman Kehr, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that it is not unusual to have a plat of subdivision with pages for each floor for multi-family developments. She stated that because of the tight site and the petitioner's desire to accommodate certain living spaces in each unit, the configuration requires separate sheets for the ground floor and for the second floor.

Commissioner Kehr stated appreciation for the petitioner's effort to provide for a turn around on the property to avoid cars backing out on to McKinley Road. She stated that she has concerns about the use of crushed stone for the driveway due to the potential for the stone to get out on to McKinley Road. She noted that McKinley Road is a City road and the City has responsibility for maintenance. She stated that the City Engineer's approval should be sought before the installation occurs. She invited public comment, hearing none, she closed the public hearing and invited final questions and comments from the Commission. Hearing none, she invited a motion.

Commissioner Douglass made a motion to recommend approval of the final plat of subdivision to the City Council.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ruggles and was approved by the Commission by a 4 to 0 vote.

6. Update: An update on concepts and discussions to date pertaining to Phase 3 of the McKinley Road Redevelopment will be presented for Commission and public input. (McKinley Road/Westminster). No Commission action is requested at this time.

Property Owner: 361 Westminster LLC (50% Peter Witmer 50% Todd Altounian)

Representative: Peter Witmer, architect

Chairman Kehr asked the Commission for any conflicts of interest or Ex Parte contacts.

Commissioner Dixon stated that he is acquainted with the petitioners but has no business relationship with them. He stated that he can rule on the petition objectively.

Hearing no further declarations from the Commission, Chairman Kehr sworn in all those planning to speak and invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Witmer presented the petition. He reviewed the second phase of the McKinley Road Redevelopment which was recently approved by the Commission. He noted that construction of the second phase is now underway. He noted that at the time the second phase of the development was presented to the Commission for approval, the Commission stated a preference for seeing the remainder of the development presented in a single phase, instead of two additional phases. He noted that the Commission also encouraged discussions with neighboring residents as concepts are developed. He stated that as a follow up to the Commission's requests, various concepts for the remainder of the development were explored. He stated that as a first step, he contacted the immediate neighbor to the east on Westminster who expressed an interest in selling his property to be incorporated into the development. In response, various concept plans were developed that explored possibilities for incorporating the additional land area into the development. He stated that the concepts were presented to additional neighbors in the area. He stated that he heard emphatically from neighbors that they opposed expanding the development beyond the boundaries originally envisioned. He stated that although the exercise was worthwhile, based on feedback from the neighbors, it was determined by the developers that returning to the original concept of a condominium building on the southern portion of the property and a duplex on the north, along the Westminster streetscape, was the appropriate approach. He presented streetscape sketches of the various concepts that were explored for the remaining phase of the development. He stated that the option presented for Commission input closely conforms to the approved master plan for the overall development, with a larger building and a smaller building. He stated that overall, as currently proposed, the development will have fewer units than permitted. He stated that the proposed plan will allow for the buildings in phase three to step down in massing and height from the buildings in the earlier phases to provide a transition to the single family homes to the east. He noted that the scheme proposed preserves the open space to the north of the Library extending across the phase two and phase three areas as requested by the Commission. He reviewed the plan noting that as currently proposed, a duplex fronts on Westminster. He presented an image showing the relationship between proposed duplex and the existing houses and condominium building to west and east. He reviewed a section through the property to illustrate the transition in scale from west to east, and the

grade change. He reviewed some conceptual sketches of the buildings noting that detailed elevations have not yet been prepared pending feedback from the Commission on the various concepts explored. He stated that the plan presented is consistent with the development as envisioned by the Master Plan. He requested input from the Commission.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dixon, Mr. Witmer confirmed that his preferred plan includes a duplex facing the Westminster streetscape and a condominium building on the southern portion of the property. He confirmed that the phase two building was previously approved by the Commission.

In response to questions from Commissioner Douglass, Mr. Witmer explained that the duplex is envisioned as a two-story building with a roof. He noted that the building is intended to provide a transition from the larger masses to the west, to the smaller building masses to the east. He stated that a floor to floor height of 11'6" is desired to allow 10 foot ceilings. He stated that the building is envisioned as 35' to the mid-point of the roof.

In response to questions from Commissioner Ruggles, Mr. Witmer clarified that the south end of the condominium building will not extend past the edge of the sidewalk and confirmed that the open space discussed by the Commission at the previous meeting, is preserved. He confirmed that the intent is to design the condominium building to provide an architectural element at the east end of the road that enters the site from McKinley Road. He stated that the condominium building as now envisioned will be two stories with a third floor in the mansard roof. He confirmed that the building will have units on three floors. He stated that as envisioned, the duplex on the north portion of the site will have one unit on the first floor and one unit on the second floor. He stated that the two buildings, as planned, will share an underground garage. He noted that due to the narrow configuration of the property, the options for the design of the garage are limited. He stated that the garage will likely have parking spaces on only one side to allow sufficient space to maneuver. He stated that the current thinking is that the two buildings will share a single ramp into the underground garage. He pointed out that there is a grade change on the property which is helpful in designing the garage and access ramp. He confirmed that the current thinking is that the access ramp for the underground garage will be located between the two buildings but acknowledged that functionally, that location is problematic. He stated that the access ramp will be studied further.

Commissioner Ruggles noted that the recommendations in the Master Plan encourage a "meaningful" open space. She encouraged consideration of greater setbacks noting that five foot setbacks are not meaningful.

In response to a questions from Commissioner Douglass, Mr. Witmer stated that the floor plate of the duplex is envisioned as about 3,500 square feet. He stated that no third floor living space is planned in the duplex building. He noted that a traditional pitched roof is envisioned in keeping with the character of single family homes in the area.

Commissioner Ruggles noted that the duplex will essentially be a single family residence, without a garage. She encouraged further study to allow the duplex building to read as residential in character and to provide more open space between the neighbors to the east and the new structure.

In response to questions from Commissioner Ruggles, Mr. Witmer noted that the site is challenging due to the narrow configuration. He reiterated that the density is less than previously approved. He stated that the architectural style of the buildings in the third and final phase of the development are envisioned in a different architectural style than the first two buildings to bring the scale down and create a transition from the higher density development along McKinley Road, to the single family neighborhood. He noted that the buildings in the third phase will have a smaller footprint and there will be more open space and greater setbacks than in the first two phases of the development, but will be constructed of the same high quality materials. He stated that the phase three buildings will not have useable roof top spaces but instead will have balconies that step back from the property lines.

In response to questions from Chairman Kehr, Mr. Witmer confirmed that the number of units plays into the ability to provide underground parking and open space on the site from an economic perspective. He confirmed that the intent is to provide an architectural element on the third building that is centered on the east end of the road and visible from McKinley Road. He stated that a gable end or columns may be used to create the desired visual terminus. He acknowledged that the building elevations have not yet been developed because the Commission asked that the overall concept for the final phase of the development be brought to the Commission early in the process for input. He stated that the existing house at 351 E. Westminster, west of the proposed duplex, is a two story structure about 35 feet in height. He stated that the proposed duplex is intended to balance the streetscape, filling the gap that currently exists with a structure that transitions from the taller buildings along McKinley Road to the smaller buildings to the east. He stated that the duplex could have a porch element to pick up on elements of the existing 351 residence. He confirmed that the setback distance from the street will also transition from west to east. At the request of Chairman Kehr, he reviewed the various schemes considered including those that extended the development to the east, on to the 373 E. Westminster property.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dixon, Mr. Witmer confirmed that the schemes which expand the development area were prepared in response to discussions with the neighbor to the east. He stated that no formal agreement was entered into with the neighbor and that the schemes were developed for study purposes only to assure all options were considered.

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

Maura Connelly, Laurel 385 E. Westminster, stated that she grew up in the area and recently moved into the home behind, to the south of, 373 E. Westminster. She

stated that she has not spoken with the developer but communicated with other neighbors about her opposition to the plan. She stated concerns about parking, traffic, density and drainage. She stated that her property will be enclosed with larger structures making her property unappealing. She stated strong opposition to the plan.

Chairman Kehr commented that there is fairly dense landscaping between the proposed development and the 385 E. Westminster property.

Doug Donavon, 373 E. Westminster, stated that he lives immediately to the east and north of the proposed development. He stated that he is the subject of some of the comments made by the developer. He stated that he has not collaborated with the developer on the schemes presented. He stated that his comments have not been heard. He stated that the development has been ever changing with the parcel on Westminster first discussed as green space, then as a single family house, and now a duplex. He stated that he is interested to learn how to be part of the discussion.

Chairman Kehr commented that this meeting was scheduled specifically to allow an open conversation about the concepts for the final phase of the development. She stated that the Commission is not scheduled to take any action on the matter at this time and will expect to see more detailed plans in the future.

Jeff Torosian, 401 E. Westminster, stated that he has had some discussions with the developer and reviewed an initial scheme which extended the development on to the Donovan's property. He stated that he uniformly rejected the proposal. He stated that he opposes any development of the Donovan property other than a single family house consistent with the current zoning on the property. He stated that he also opposes the duplex scheme now presented noting that this is the first time that he is seeing that concept. He stated that this area is important and critical to the community. He stated that the area is within the historic district and stated that he expects the zoning laws to be upheld. He stated that there needs to be a higher level of scrutiny for developments in the historic district. He stated that there is an expectation that the historic district will not be changed. He stated that when he moved into the community, his expectation was that the historic district will stay as it was 30 years ago. He reviewed the history of his residence and the surrounding area noting that his house was designed by noted architect Jerome Cerney. He reiterated that this area is an important part of the historic district. He noted that when the building in which the Historical Society was previously located was torn down, Arthur Miller, noted historian of the community, expressed concern that the building was being demolished without a plan for how the site would be redeveloped. He stated that although the Historical Society building was not architecturally significant, it was historically significant. He stated frustration with the lack of communication and understanding about what is happening on the parcel on which the Historical Society was located. He stated that there has been a lack of transparency and the project has experienced classic project scope creep. He stated that as part of an earlier planning process, the community was assured that

the office development previously located on McKinley Road would be relocated to the west side of the railroad tracks and the area would be redeveloped for residential uses and a cultural corridor. He stated that now the area is an alley with block buildings and no green space. He stated that the development is not something that will make people want to move to the area. He stated that development in the area should be historically significant, not a bunch of multi-family buildings. He stated that the Westminster streetscape is historically significant and crucial to the town. He stated that the property should not be developed in the manner proposed. He stated that there should not be an assumption that the phase four area needs to be developed with a building. He stated that a fourth building has not been approved. He reiterated that no building needs to be located on the phase four area and noted that the City Council included the area as part of the redevelopment area but it could be used as open space, for traffic flow or developed as part of the cultural corridor. He noted that the project has the entire community upended.

Chairman Kehr noted that to date, the Commission has held at least five public meetings on the overall development. She stated that to date, no approvals have been granted for the third and final phase of the development. She stated that the development occurred in phases to allow the community to see how the earlier buildings were being developed. She stated that it is her recollection that preliminary discussions about the last phase of the project included the potential for a single family home or duplex and a multi-family building. She stated that the Plan Commission intends to continue the process of giving each part of the development careful review. She reiterated that this meeting was specifically called to allow discussion of the third phase in a conceptual form and to provide interested parties with an additional opportunity to offer feedback. She stated that the Commission will not take action on the final phase at this time and is open minded about how to proceed.

In response to questions from Nancy Adelman, 1190 Old Mill Road, Mr. Witmer stated that currently, five or six units are envisioned in the larger building and two units in the duplex building. He confirmed that early on, there was some discussion of townhomes or row homes on the site but noted that the demand appears to be for single floor living.

Jim Opsitnik, Past President of Lake Forest Preservation Foundation, stated that he has been observing the buildout of the project. He stated that he reluctantly agrees that redevelopment of the area was needed. He raised questions about the adequacy of parking for guests noting that there is limited parking in the area for the high density proposed. He stated that the back side of the Library is squeezed but acknowledged that additional open space is being proposed. He stated concern that the density proposed is too much for the area. He stated that the sketches presented to date are not drawn to scale and that there is too much ambiguity in what is presented to grant approval.

Leslie Lardino, 351 E. Westminster, stated that she was not contacted by the developer. She stated that her house and family have been impacted by the ongoing construction with traffic, foul language from contractors, and garbage. She stated that more people living in the area will increase the traffic which is already a problem. She expressed concern about the impact of further development on the site on her family.

At the request of Chairman Kehr, Ms. Czerniak reviewed the process to date. She explained that the concept for a cultural corridor was envisioned when it was anticipated that the Historical Society would remain on the City owned property at 361 E. Westminster and would restore and expand the existing building, or build a new building on the site. She stated that the cultural corridor concept envisioned pedestrian connections between the Historical Society, the Library and Gorton Community Center. She stated that the Historical Society considered many options before making the decision to move to another nearby location. She stated that with that decision, and with the three office parcels on McKinley Road becoming available for redevelopment, the decision was made to return the area to residential use to increase density within walking distance to the Central Business District and train station. She confirmed that the decision included directing any future office development to the west side of the railroad tracks. She confirmed that the building that the Historical Society was located in had structural, mechanical, functional, life safety and water issues. She stated that the structure was originally built as a coach house and was never intended to be a public or institutional building. She stated that many repairs and stop gap measures were taken however, the building was failing structurally and it was determined that it should be demolished for public safety reasons. She stated that a master plan for the redevelopment of several properties in the area was developed to assure that the area would develop comprehensively, instead of incrementally, parcel by parcel. She stated that the City Council determined that the City owned parcel, the phase three parcel, should be included in the redevelopment and entered into a purchase/sale agreement with the developer. She stated that the approved master plan anticipated development of the area in phases, with multiple buildings, all for residential use. She stated that the master plan did not define specific building foot prints or types but did identify the locations of the different phases. She stated that under the current zoning, the parcel fronting on Westminster could be developed with a duplex separate and apart from the larger development. She stated that the density that is permitted in the area, under the current zoning, would allow a greater number of units than is proposed and would allow office development on the parcels fronting on McKinley Road. She acknowledged that the zoning does not speak to the size of units, only to setbacks and building heights which together limit building sizes. She stated that at the Commission's direction, the developer is before the Commission with conceptual drawings to get input before proceeding with further detailing the plans.

Chairman Kehr noted that consistent with the approved Master Plan, a small parcel is being transferred to the City to provide space for additional parking for the

Library. She noted that as part of the agreement, the developer bore the responsibility and cost for demolishing the former Historical Society building. Hearing no further requests to speak from members of the public, she invited additional questions or comments from the Commission.

In response to questions from Commissioner Ruggles, Ms. Czerniak stated that the overall development site, all three phases, could support about 30 residential units under the existing zoning.

Commissioner Ruggles pointed out that the number of units is reduced because the units as built and proposed are large. She noted concern about the total building square footage proposed.

In response to questions from Chairman Kehr, Mr. Witmer stated that in the first two buildings, the units each have two, three or four assigned underground parking spaces. He noted that there are on street parking spaces within the development and a few additional surface spaces on the east side of the first building.

In response to questions from Chairman Kehr, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that public safety staff are regularly consulted during the review of proposed site plans to assure that circulation and access is acceptable.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dixon, Ms. Czerniak stated that the discussions about redevelopment of the area occurred over a several year period with substantial discussion occurring in 2016. She stated that based on the prior approvals and agreement, an additional 14 residential units could be constructed in the development.

Commissioner Dixon commented that fewer residential units will generate less traffic and fewer people in the area.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dixon, Mr. Witmer confirmed that as currently envisioned, there will be six units in the condominium building and two in the duplex. He noted that the parking study that was completed during the master planning process anticipated a total of thirty units in the overall development. He reminded the Commission that the site was previously developed with three office buildings which generated and had the potential to generate significantly more traffic than will be generated by the residential development. He added that there was a cut through access from Westminster to the Library which is eliminated with the redevelopment of the area.

In response to questions from Commissioner Douglass, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that the parcel that fronts on Westminster is about 10,000 square feet in size.

In response to questions from Chairman Kehr, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that public notices were mailed out to residents and neighbors extending beyond the three property deep requirement of the Code. She added that notices were also mailed to those on the interested parties list in the larger community.

Commissioner Dixon encouraged interested parties and neighbors to contact the developer

Chairman Kehr stated that it is the Commission's expectation that the developer and contractors are always mindful of the neighbors.

Commissioner Ruggles stated that her initial impression is that the concept for phase three has not changed much from the initial discussions of the master plan. She noted however that it appears to be more dense, with more building mass, than she originally anticipated. She stated that the site appears crowded. She stated that she believes that the project architect can address that issue. She stated that it could be beneficial if the duplex is designed in scale with the neighboring houses. She encouraged study of how to bring the scale down to a more human, residential scale. She acknowledged that it is a challenge to make the project economically viable while providing open space and creating a residential feel along Westminster. She stated that the project should move from a commercial feel along McKinley Road to a more residential scale to the east. She suggested that the developer should develop more detailed plans to convey how the residential scale is achieved.

Commissioner Douglass agreed that the issue is one of mass and scale as the development transitions from phases one and two, to the last phase. He stated that in his opinion, the phase three buildings do not need to look the same as the buildings in the first two phases but should be compatible with similar architectural details and materials. He stated that he is encouraged by the concept of a gable or other element at the east end of the road that will be visible from McKinley Road. He stated that the current schematic drawings do not appear to fully convey the developer's vision. He stated that he assumes that each of the buildings will be more articulated than they appear in the concepts presented. He encouraged the developer to focus on breaking up the massing to allow the phase three buildings to appear more residential than the earlier buildings. He stated that the underground parking for residents is a positive aspect of the project along with the increased green space now proposed and the overall reduction in traffic as a result of the lower number of units than theoretically could be permitted.

Commissioner Dixon commented that the overall development appears to be generally in compliance with the master plan that was completed for this area. He noted that in particular, the area is being redeveloped for residential use, not office use. He stated that in general, the proposed development appears to be consistent with the 333 Westminster building on the corner of McKinley Road and Westminster. He agreed that care needs to be taken to provide a transition along the streetscape to the single family residential area to the east. He agreed that the scheme with the duplex fronting on McKinley Road appears to create that transition better than the other schemes that were studied by the developer. He stated that work should continue in an effort to address the concerns of the neighbors. He stated that open space is a concern adding that it appears that the development is working to incorporate open space but asked that further clarification be provided.

He noted that the additional land for Library parking appears to have been addressed in the second phase plan. He agreed with comments of Commissioner Ruggles that further detailing of the buildings will be helpful in understanding the transition planned for the Westminster streetscape and the focal point at the east end of the road.

Chairman Kehr stated appreciation for the participation in the discussion on the part of many parties. She stated that the Commission will await further detailed plans in response to the comments offered by the Commission and staff.

7. Introduction: Preliminary information will be presented on a 4-lot subdivision proposed at 770 Washington Road. Commission and public input is requested. No Commission action is requested at this time.

Property Owner: Swift Family

Representative: Michael Adelman, attorney

Chairman Kehr asked the Commission for any conflicts of interest or Ex Parte contacts.

Commissioner Dixon noted that he has known the Swift family all of his life but stated that he will be able to rule on the petition objectively.

Hearing no further comments from the Commission, she sworn in all those planning to speak on this agenda item and invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Michael Adelman stated the he is speaking on behalf of the owners of 770 Washington Road and requesting approval of a four lot subdivision. He stated that four lots are proposed in conformance with the minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet in the R-3 zoning district. He provided some history noting that Mr. and Ms. Swift bought the property in 1959 and raised 13 children in the house. He stated that the 12 surviving siblings are the owners of the property today and want to realize fair market value for the land. He stressed that the siblings are not developers trying to seek a profit. He noted that Mr. Swift passed away in 2014 and Ms. Swift in January, 2017. He stated that in the summer of 2017, two of the siblings met with City staff to discuss demolition of the house. He stated that staff explained that the house was in the historic district and encouraged exploration of other options. He stated that in fall, 2017, the house was listed for sale with the hope of avoiding the time and expense of pursuing demolition or subdivision of the property. He stated that the owners were contacted by one prospective developer who said that no one will buy the house but expressed interest in the land if demolition is approved. He stated that in 2018, after two meetings and a public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission approved the demolition of the house. He stated that with the approval in hand, the property was simultaneously marketed as a developed parcel and as vacant property. He stated that two developers expressed interest in the property at that time but requested long contingency periods and the intent to try to obtain a zone change to allow development of the property with 6 to 8 and 12 to 16 units respectively. Given the owners' interest in liquidating the estate and avoiding continued carrying costs, neither offer was accepted because obtaining a

zone change for the property would be difficult and likely objectionable to the neighbors. He noted that the zoning along McKinley Road allows higher density in that area, near the Swift property. He stated however that the Swift property is zoned R-3 zoning, for 40,000 square foot lots. He stated that because there was no interest in the property, the owners incurred the cost and proceeded with demolition of the house. He stated that after demolition, there were still no interested buyers. He stated that the owners decided to list the property hypothetically as four one acre parcels and received a strong expression of interest from potential buyers and one of the potential lots was put under contract pending approval of a subdivision. He stated that the owners brought in a consultant to prepare some development schemes for the property, some of which proposed more than four lots. He presented images of various concepts noting the opportunity for clustering homes on the site but noted that an increase in density would be required to support the installation of infrastructure to serve a cluster development. He stated that a cluster type development would be out of character with the surrounding area and would likely result in homes of a single architectural style rather diverse architectural styles of homes consistent with the surrounding areas. He stated that such a plan would likely not be supported by the neighbors and would not be viable. He stated that the current site plan evolved after evaluation of various options for the site and after consultations with the project engineer and arborist. He stated that because of the shape of the site, it is difficult to be creative with the parcel without asking for a zone change which the owners do not want to do. He stated that the subdivision is straight forward with lots of similar sizes and fairly regular shapes taking into account the curving nature of the adjacent streets. He stated that each parcel will allow about a 5,000 square foot home based on the City Code. He stated that a tree survey was completed and surprisingly, it revealed that many of the trees on the site are in failing condition. He noted that the City's Certified Arborist identified the trees worthy of preservation. He noted that the topography of the site slopes from the northwest corner of the site to the southeast corner with the lowest point located at the intersection of Walnut and Washington Roads. He presented topography maps noting the one foot contour lines which indicate a gradual slope across the property. He stated that any grading or filling will be minimal to create level building pads. He stated that there is an interesting landscape feature in the southwest corner of proposed lot three, a seating area and grill. He stated that although the feature is not historic, it is wholly located on Lot 3 to allow for its preservation if desired by the buyer. He stated that the pond in the southeast corner of the site is not historic and not significant but noted that the surrounding area, the rocks and vegetation is interesting. He noted that the pond is not a feature on the streetscape and not visible to the public. He stated that the pond adds no value to the property but instead, is a liability. He commented on the character of the neighborhood and the variety of lot sizes in the area and around Triangle Park. He noted that there are many historic and significant homes in the area and stated that the proposed subdivision will enable people to buy lots and construct significant homes that will contribute to the area. He stated that the homes and site plans will require review by the Historic Preservation Commission. He noted that some people have commented that the

Swift property contributes to the sense of open space at Triangle Park. He noted however that for most of the year, views into the Swift property from Walnut Road are completely blocked due to the existing vegetation. He pointed out that the Swift property is privately owned and not part of Triangle Park. He added that Triangle Park is not a destination, but instead, a place that people walk through on the way to the train station, the beach or the College. He noted that other properties in the area are surrounded by tall fences which do not allow any views into the properties. He stated that the proposed four lot subdivision fully conforms to the Code requirements. He stated that each home will be scrutinized by the Historic Preservation Commission to assure quality, compatibility and a uniqueness of style appropriate for the historic district. He noted that the front yard setbacks on Lots two and three are extended significantly beyond the front yard setback required in the R-3 zoning district to minimize construction in the areas where the grade change is greatest. He stated that pursuing subdivision of the property involves more time and money than the owners anticipated spending in settling the family estate. He noted that going through the Historic Preservation Commission process for review of the demolition required that the owners engage a consultant to conduct an historic assessment. He noted that subdividing the property will require the owners to incur additional expenses to extend water and sanitary sewer to each of the properties and pay impact fees. He stated however that the four lots will be premium lots, within walking distance to the train station and businesses, and the property is extraordinary. He stated that once the property is subdivided, there will still be the opportunity for a buyer to purchase more than one lot and preserve additional open space.

Ms. Czerniak stated that the Historic Preservation Commission deliberated for a long time before approving the demolition of the residence located on the property. She stated that each Commissioner walked through the house and spent time on the property. She confirmed that an Historic Resource Assessment report was prepared by a consultant, Susan Benjamin, and was submitted to the Commission. She stated that the report supported the demolition of the residence. She stated that the Commission ultimately determined that the demolition criteria were met but expressed interest in providing comment on future redevelopment schemes for the property. She confirmed that the property is in the R-3 zoning district which requires a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet. She stated that the property is also in the Historic Residential and Open Space Preservation District, an overlay district that provides the flexibility to require larger setbacks or other special conditions in order to preserve natural or historic attributes of the property. She stated that the staff report includes a recommendation that the Plan Commission refer the proposed subdivision to the Historic Preservation Commission for input prior to taking action on the petition. She noted from the staff perspective, discussion about preserving the general topography of the site, preserving and protecting quality trees and groups of trees, and considering parameters for driveway locations are topics that should be considered.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dixon, Mr. Adelman, stated that there is already one curb cut on the property and only three more curb cuts are required to

serve the proposed lots. He stated that ultimately, the location of the curb cuts will be subject to review and approval by the City at the time homes are proposed for the property. He stated that to assure appropriate sight lines, vegetation may need to be cut back in some areas. He stated that shared driveways are problematic and require maintenance agreements and easements. He added that they can be a source of conflict between neighbors.

Commissioner Ruggles noted that Lot 3 meets the street at the corner. She suggested that an alternate lot configuration be considered to provide the opportunity for a curb cut further from the corner. She stated that for this lot, the location of the curb cut is a practical and public safety issue.

In response to questions from Chairman Kehr, Mr. Adelman stated that the amount of impervious surface will depend on where the houses are sited. He noted that pushing houses away from the street results in longer driveways. He stated that the percentage of impervious coverage will not be as high as it is for the lots on the south side of Deerpath, across from Triangle Park.

Chairman Kehr requested that the landscape features mentioned be discussed by the Historic Preservation Commission.

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

Thomas Raines, 771 Washington Road, stated that after purchasing his home, he restored the house to its original condition and placed an easement on the façade to protect it in the future. He stated that he incurred significant costs to do the work. He stated that his house turned out well and that he enjoys the street very much. He stated that he was not aware of the pending redevelopment on McKinley Road and expressed concern about the traffic that will be generated by the development. He noted the lack of sidewalk connections in the area and explained that a pedestrian needs to cross Westminster to get to the sidewalk, a difficult street to cross in the late afternoon when the sun is glaring. He stated concern about where the curb cuts for the new lots will be located noting that Washington Road is narrow. He stated that the proposed development could add 10 to 12 drivers to the street. He stated that Washington Road is a busy, curving street. He stated that when he bought his home, he thought that the Swift property would remain intact and developed with only one single family home in a park-like setting. He stated that during the Historic Preservation Commission discussion, there was discussion about saving the pond and now testimony is presented stating that the pond is not significant. He stated that he is not supportive of the proposed subdivision. He questioned how a subdivision can be considered without knowing the locations of the curb cuts, and how the development will affect the historic nature of the area. He expressed concern about higher density development moving further east.

David Brush, 777 Washington Road, stated that his driveway is located across the street from the existing driveway on the property. He stated agreement with the

concerns voiced by his neighbor, Mr. Raines. He stated concern about the location of curb cuts, the density, trees, and the ultimate fate of this historically significant property. He stated that the previous house on the site was not properly maintained and agreed that demolition of the house made sense. He stated that during some his construction project on his home, Ms. Swift called the police because she was unable to get out of her driveway because of contractors parked on the narrow street. He stated support for referring the proposed development to the Historic Preservation Commission. He asked that during the ongoing discussions, the Swifts continue to maintain the property and mow the lawn.

Bill McFadden, representative of the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation, confirmed that the Commission received Art Miller's letter. He reiterated that the site is a very unique site in the heart of the Lake Forest. He expressed concern that the action taken by the Historic Preservation Commission to allow demolition without a plan for redevelopment will encourage other property owners to come forward to request demolition. He urged the Commission to proceed with caution and to understand the detail and strive for creativity. He suggested that a plan be considered that avoids disturbance of the south half of the property by reducing the density permitted.

Mr. Torosian, 401 E. Westminster, stated that he is very much in favor of the development as proposed. He stated that he is not in favor of a zone change, clustered housing or increased density on the property. He stated that the plan is a thoughtful treatment for the property even though it is not creative. He stated this is a fair design and reiterated his support of the plan.

Hearing no further requests to speak from the public, Chairman Kehr invited response to public comment from the petitioner.

Mr. Adelman stated that he previously developed subdivisions in Lake Forest and was not required to provide information on curb cut locations as part of the subdivision process. He stated that his clients understand that review and comment by the Historic Preservation Commission is required as part of the conditions of approval of the demolition. He stated that the plan as presented is designed to minimize the amount of grading that will be needed on the site by establishing larger than required front yard setbacks. He stated that in his opinion, the addition of three more curb cuts will not significantly impact traffic in the area noting that a family of 15 people lived on the site for decades. He stated that the placement of curb cuts will be directed by the City at the time homes are presented for approval. He stated that he is willing to have a conversation about preserving some landscape features of the site. He stated that each of the parcels are large enough to accommodate construction vehicles and agreed that no construction vehicles should park on the streets. He confirmed that the site was recently mowed and will continue to be maintained. He stated that the property is a premier site and stated that in his opinion, redevelopment with four single family homes will not have a negative effect on the future of other large estate properties in the community. He stated however that he believes that allowing greater density and a cluster

development on the site may have a negative impact on other larger properties. He stated that the four lot subdivision is in keeping with the overall character of the area. He stated that the property owners do not wish to pursue an increase in density on the parcel. He stated that there is no market for the property in its present form.

Chairman Kehr returned the matter to the Commission for final comments. discussion.

Commissioner Douglass noted that a condition of the approval of the demolition of the house requested that the Commission consider the unique characteristics of the property in the review of any future development plans for the site. He noted that the characteristics identified included the topography, the landscaped streetscape, landscape features on the site, mature trees, the open south lawn and views to and from Triangle Park. He acknowledged that the site plan influences the ability to preserve the features. He stated that some further study is needed of the options for locating a curb cut on Lot 3. He stated that configuring the lot to allow access from Walnut Road, along an easement on Lot 2 or a flag lot configuration may be worth considering. He stated that the proposed plan appears to preserve some aspects of the south lawn and the feel of the site. He stated that the desire to preserve a vista across properties could be achieved by restricting fences in some form. He agreed that tree preservation in some form is appropriate and areas for preservation could be shown on the plat of subdivision. He suggested that the setbacks could be aligned with the building pads as shown on the site plan to preserve more open space.

Commissioner Ruggles stated that her general impression is that the proposed four lot subdivision is appropriate for the area. She stated that with four lots on the site, the whole streetscape will change and she questioned the need to preserve the existing streetscape. She stated that the plan as presented provides a significant amount of front yard area. She stated that she is not sure that preserving the south lawn offers any benefit to the larger community. She stated that she is generally in favor of the plan as presented with consideration given to preservation of appropriate landscape elements, significant trees, limits on fences and some further consideration of some limitations on curb cuts.

Commissioner Dixon stated that the property is going to be redeveloped and he acknowledged that not everyone is going to be 100% satisfied with how it is developed. He stated that it is important to consider the ingress and egress to Lots 3 and 4. He stated that having a single curb cut to access a cluster of houses at the top of the site could address some of the concerns that have been raised. He noted that with a single ingress, the south lawn would be preserved. He acknowledged that such an approach would impact traffic and density. He acknowledged that the pond appears to be important to some but noted that he has known the property for 40 years and does not recall the pond.

Chairman Kehr concurred generally with the comments of Commissioner Dixon. She acknowledged that the four lots as proposed are consistent with the current zoning

on the property. She stated continued concern about the location of curb cuts and traffic. She asked that the width of Washington Road be provided to the Commission. She stated that the lawn and parkway should continue to be maintained while redevelopment of the parcel is being considered. She stated concern about the amount of impervious surface. She encouraged the property owners to consider a cluster concept of six to eight units to help preserve open space on the property and to provide the opportunity for smaller houses. She stated that such a concept would be forward thinking and appropriate for a site located close to the train station and the business district. She stated that if some of the lower quality trees are removed from the site, some vistas across the property could be opened up. She stated support for referring the proposed plan to the Historic Preservation Commission.

Commissioner Douglass stated that he is drawn to the cluster concept noting that it takes the massing of the original house and expands it. He stated that the concept is intriguing and worth more study.

Commissioner Dixon stated that clustered housing could target empty nester buyers to minimize traffic from the site.

Commissioner Ruggles stated that she does not see cluster housing as being appropriate for the site and surrounding area. She noted that the original mapping for east Lake Forest was for single family homes. She stated that trying to replicate the existing house by clustering housing at the center of the site does not seem appropriate for the area. She stated that in her opinion, such a plan appears contrived. She stated that redevelopment of the property should be looked at in the context of the larger area.

Commissioner Dixon stated that four lots make sense but questioned how to deal with the curb cuts. He stated that because of the configuration of the property, a clustered concept is interesting.

Commissioner Douglass commented that four pie shaped lots could also be considered with a common access point in the middle.

Hearing no further comments, Chairman Kehr invited a motion.

Commissioner Dixon made a motion to continue consideration of the petition after review by the Historic Preservation Commission.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Douglass and was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

8. Opportunity for the public to address the Plan Commission on matters not on the agenda.

There was no public comments presented on non-agenda item.

9. Additional comments from staff.

No additional information was offered by City staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Czerniak
Director of Community Development