

The City of Lake Forest
Plan Commission
Proceedings of the September 13, 2023 Meeting

A meeting of the Lake Forest Plan Commission was held on Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

Commission members present: Chairman Dixon and Commissioners Barrett Davie, Jamie Moorhead, Louis Pickus, Mark Pasquesi, and Lisa Nehring

Commissioners absent: (One Vacant Position)

Staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development and Jen Baehr, Planner

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

Chairman Dixon introduced the members of the Commission and reviewed the meeting procedures followed by the Commission.

2. Consideration of the minutes of the June 14, 2023 meeting.

The minutes of the June 14, 2023 Plan Commission meeting were approved as submitted.

**3. Presentation, Opening of Public Hearing, Preliminary Comments:
Introduction of a new plan for redevelopment of the vacant property located on the southeast corner of Waukegan and Everett Roads (formerly Pasquesi Home and Garden and a gas station). A multi-family residential building with detached garages, a coffee shop with a drive through, surface parking, and landscaping are proposed. A subdivision with cross easements, Special Use Permits, and variances are requested.**

Property Owner: Iosue Investments LLC (Carmine Iosue, Nicole Mertens)

Presented by: Carmine Iosue, Property Owner

Jack Frigo, Real Estate Advisor

Nick Patera, Teska Associates, Inc.

Chairman Dixon asked the Commission for any conflicts of interest or Ex Parte contacts. Hearing none, he swore in all those intending to speak on the petition. He invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Frigo stated that a previous plan was approved by the City for the Iosue property to allow construction of a medical office building and a coffee shop with a drive through however, despite the owner's best efforts, there was not sufficient interest in the medical office building to allow the project to move forward. He explained that he believes that the pandemic was a factor in not being able to move the project forward. He stated

that the property owner engaged commercial real estate brokers and contacted hospitals and medical office users to assess interest, without success. He stated that currently, the overall office market is difficult but acknowledged that the medical office environment specifically, is better than general office. He stated that more recently, the property owner was approached by a multi-family residential developer interested in the south portion of the site. He stated that interest in multi-family residential is on an upward trend. He stated that the south portion of the property is now under contract with Greg Van Schaack, a residential developer. He introduced the property owner, developer, and the project team. He noted that Mr. Van Schaack is a Lake Forest resident and who, prior to his recent retirements, held a leadership position at Hines and was involved in the development of major office and residential properties. He stated that the property now owned by the Losue family has been vacant for 15 years adding that the development plan now presented is a good plan. He stated that the multi-family residential development market is healthy and financeable. He stated that the development of the site for residential use can move forward in 2024 while a potential start date for a medical office development is uncertain.

Mr. Losue stated that he has been a long time resident of the community. He stated that in addition to owning the subject property, his family owns the adjacent office building at 1025 Everett Road which is fully occupied. He stated that he has a great relationship with the Church across the street. He said that as an adjacent property owner, he got tired of looking at vacant property on the corner and decided to acquire it with the intention of creating a high quality, pedestrian friendly campus to provide an attractive gateway to Lake Forest. He stated that he is proud of the plan as presented.

Mr. Van Schaack, 50 S. Orchard Circle, said that he recently retired after a 36 year career in development. He said that he would like to develop a small scale property in Lake Forest, near the Metra station and near restaurants, retail, and medical uses. He explained that the suburbs are starting to embrace boutique rental housing developments to attract people who choose to rent such as empty nesters who spend much of their time away from home. He added that smaller units may attract those who work in the community.

Mr. Patera, Teska Associates, reviewed that a consolidated campus is the goal, not separate uses. He stated that the intent is to develop an integrated site with consistent architecture and landscape themes. He stated that the site is designed to be pedestrian friendly to residents who live on the site as well as to nearby residents. He reviewed the site plan noting the existing office building owned by the Losue family, the location of the proposed coffee shop and drive through and the multi-family residential rental building. He noted that the buildings are sited near the street to minimize views of parking areas from the streetscape and to activate the street with lights and activity. He stated that lush landscape is planned around the perimeter of the site and around the various "rooms" of parking. He stated that fencing is planned along the east and the south property lines adding that low level lighting will be used throughout the site to minimize impacts on neighboring residential properties. He stated that a mixed use development is appealing to keep the site active at night benefitting the community by

creating a “lived in” feeling in the area. He presented images of conceptual renderings of the development noting that interrelationships of the buildings.

Mr. Antunovich, Antunovich Associates, stated that he has worked in Chicago for 45 to 50 years and started his own firm in 1990. He reviewed his career, his involvement with various projects, and his familiarity with Lake Forest. He stated that a four story multi-family residential building is proposed with units of different sizes to accommodate various family types, not just empty nesters. He stated that the building is designed in the Tudor Revival style, and is inspired by the Deer Path Inn, the most iconic building in Lake Forest, the Deer Path Inn. He noted that the proposed building is similar to the commercial buildings to the north. He stated that the building will be brick masonry with a stone base. He stated that like the medical office building, the proposed residential building is 49 feet tall but noted that the 49 feet is measured to the bottom of the gables on the residential building. He acknowledged that at the top of the gables, the residential building is taller, 54 feet tall, to allow the gables to screen the roof top mechanicals. He stated that the building will be set in lush landscaping. He acknowledged the concerns raised about the large surface parking lot and noted that the pavement will be broken up by heavy landscaping. He stated that 68 parking spaces will be provided for the residential building, two spaces for each unit and four additional spaces for visitors. He pointed out that ten of the parking spaces will be covered, located in detached garages along the south property line. He stated that the low profile garages will provide screening for the neighbors to the south. He stated that all of the buildings will help to mitigate noise from Waukegan Road and the railroad tracks for neighbors to the east. He reviewed the first floor plan noting the small step out areas from the first floor units. He reviewed the floor plan for the upper stories noting that one, two and three bedroom units are planned.

Mr. Frigo noted that the change from the medical office use to multi-family residential use reduces the overall demand for parking on the site. He stated that 42 parking spaces are needed to support the 32 residential units and at peak times, 90 spaces are needed to support the medical office building. He stated that based on estimates, trips for the residential use will be 106 per day in comparison to 1,000 trips per day for the medical office building. He stated that all of the ingress and egress points to the overall site will be shared by all three buildings, the existing office building, the coffee shop, and the multi-family residential building. He spoke to the points raised by the City Engineer. He acknowledged that the width of the access on to Everett Road was reduced from three lanes to two lanes from the previous plan to preserve a locust tree just west of the driveway. He noted that the previous plan had one inbound lane and two outbound lanes, one to the east and one to the west. He stated that the two lanes now proposed are each wider than previously proposed. He stated that if, after the development is completed, it is determined that the two lanes are problematic, the tree can be removed, and the additional driveway lane added. He stated that off site parking spaces are available for employees in the 1025 Everett Road building in the parking lots located on the north side of Everett Road through agreements with St. Patrick's and St. Mary's Churches. He stated that the driveway on the east side of the 1025 Everett Road building will be widened by two feet by expanding it toward the building, adjacent to

the window wells. He stated that the curb on the east side of the driveway that is located along the east side of the existing building cannot be moved because there is a grade change in that area. He stated that two cars can pass safely with the planned 20 foot driveway width. He acknowledged that truck traffic on the driveway would be difficult. He acknowledged that the spaces at the west end of the parking lot in front of the existing 1025 Everett Road office building could be challenging to back out of at times because of the dead end and agreed that one parking space could be removed and other parking spaces in that area converted to accessible spaces. He stated that the overall development plan was submitted to IDOT and confirmed that the development team is in contact with IDOT. He stated that currently, there are seven curb cuts on the overall site and noted that the curb cuts will be reduced to three, two on Waukegan Road, and one on Everett Road. He confirmed that the final design of the curb cuts and access points is pending input from IDOT. He stated that Mr. Iosue is interested in cooperating with IDOT and the City with respect to expanding the width of Everett Road just east of Waukegan Road adding that the proposed development, including the drive through at the coffee shop, is configured to support the planned road widening. He noted that the engineer raised concern about the depth of the parking spaces and explained that it is anticipated that cars will overhand the landscaping and as a result, the depth of the spaces as proposed should be sufficient. He stated that the minimum number of accessible parking spaces will be provided on the site. He stated that existing grade changes on the site can be accommodated and are located in areas where pedestrians will not be walking. He confirmed that auto turn studies will be completed using various vehicle types to evaluate the proposed circulation on the site. He acknowledged that the site will not accommodate semi-trucks adding that any deliveries will need to be made with vehicles that can be accommodated.

Ms. Czerniak stated that the plan now presented to the Commission is the latest in a series of plans that have been proposed over a number of years. She acknowledged that the configuration of the site presents challenges due to the narrowing of the parcel at the south end, the existing office building, access limitations, and proximity to the Waukegan and Everett Roads intersection. She noted that there are plans for improvements including the addition of lanes at the intersection of Waukegan and Everett Roads. She stated that the current plan presented for review replaces the previously approved medical office building with a multi-family residential building, proposes a double drive through lanes for the coffee shop, provides on site parking for coffee shop employees rather than off site parking, and requires fully on site parking for the residential building residents and visitors as opposed to the anticipated off site parking for employees of what was previously proposed as a medical office building. She stated that the Comprehensive Plan identifies multi-family residential as an appropriate use in the Waukegan Road/Settlers' Square Business District. She noted that the approvals for the previously approved plan for the site granted variances from the parking requirements to allow parking demands to be satisfied by off site parking for employees. She noted however that residential buildings demand adequate on site parking for residents and visitors. She stated that based on a preliminary review of the site plan, the City Engineer expressed strong concerns about the adequacy and

functionality of both circulation and parking spaces on the site. She added that the City Engineer commented that the third lane at the Everett Road access is critical given the traffic volumes on Everett Road. She acknowledged that the three land configuration would require the removal of a healthy locust tree. She noted that the City Engineer also raised concern about the dead end parking area in front of the 1025 Everett Road building noting that the current configuration makes it difficult for cars to maneuver out of the parking spaces. She added that requiring vehicles entering from Everett Road to circulate through the site to reach Starbuck's will add to congestion on the site. She noted that part of the charge of the Plan Commission's is to review the functionality of the site to avoid creating a development that will presents problems relating to on site circulation, ingress/egress, and parking in the long term. She added that the Commission's purview includes confirming that the proposed plan conforms to the Comprehensive Plan and the requirements of the B-1 zoning district or, that any variances requested satisfy the applicable criteria. She stated that subdivision of the property is also requested to, unlike with the previous plan, allow the proposed residential building to be separated off from and placed in separate ownership from the coffee shop and office building parcels. She added that the subdivision request is also under the purview of the Plan Commission. She stated that cross easements for access and potentially for parking will be needed as part of the subdivision given the limited access points. She stated that a Special Use Permit is also requested to permit a drive through and potentially other variances as well which will also fall under the purview of the Plan Commission. She noted that the design aspects of the proposed development, the massing of the building, architectural design, materials, and the specifics of the landscaping, will all be reviewed by the Building Review Board at the appropriate time. She stated that the plan is presented to the Commission and the public for preliminary comments.

In response to questions from Commissioner Moorhead, Mr. Patera stated that deliveries will occur at the south end of the coffee shop site, near the ingress from Waukegan Road. He stated that delivery trucks will park away from the coffee shop and will bring in supplies by hand truck. He stated that delivery trucks will not enter the drive through lane. He stated that delivery trucks will exit at the far south end of the overall site, circling around the residential building.

In response to questions from Commissioner Moorhead, Mr. Van Schaack stated his expectation that fewer than ten percent of the units will be occupied by families with children. He stated that families with children will not be the target market. He acknowledged that the site is tight and agreed that there is not space available for outdoor green space. He stated that the difference in the height between the residential building and the previously approved medical office building is due to the architecture and the desire to provide ten foot high ceilings for space and natural light. He stated that it may be possible to reduce the building height slightly. He stated that the building will essentially be a condominium building financed and leased as an apartment building. He stated that although desirable, underground parking is cost prohibitive. He stated that he would need a building with 200 units to make underground parking feasible.

In response to questions from Commissioner Moorhead, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that there is parking under the Villas, the multi-family residential building to the south. She stated that she cannot think of other multi-family residential buildings with detached, single story garages.

In response to questions from Commissioner Nehring, Ms. Czerniak stated that the previous approvals do not carry over this this plan. She stated that the permitted building height in the B-1 zoning district is 35 feet. She noted that height variances have been granted in the past for the tower portions of some buildings along Waukegan Road in this area.

In response to questions from Commissioner Nehring, Mr. Frigo stated that currently, 20 parking spaces are used by employees of the 1025 Everett Road office building on the Church of St. Mary's School site on the north side of Everett Road and noted that up to a dozen spaces are available for use on the St Patrick's Church site. He stated that crossing Everett Road from the parking lots across the street does not present safety issues for the staff. He clarified that the employees of the 1025 Everett Road building park in the southwest corner of the school lot, the spaces furthest away from the school. He stated that currently, the parking spaces on the St. Patrick's Church property are not needed for employee parking but could be available. He stated that if they are needed, a schedule would be worked out with the Church to avoid conflicts on days where there are events at the Church such as funerals. He stated that employees of the office building would be notified by text on days when parking changes are needed. He confirmed that the existing driveway on the east side of the 1025 Everett Road building will be widened by about two feet to the edge of the window wells on the building.

In response to questions from staff, Mr. Frigo stated that if three lanes are required at the ingress/egress from Everett Road, that can be accomplished. He stated however that the petitioner's preference is to wait to see if a two lane access workable in order to preserve an existing tree. He stated that in his opinion, the two parking spaces at the south end of the parking lot in front of the 1025 Everett Road building are functional despite the City Engineer's comments. He stated that the third space in that area could be removed.

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

Dave Jones, 1721 Bowling Green Drive, asked about the location of the accessible parking spaces noting his work with people with mobility limitations. He noted that the accessible spaces as shown on the plan will make pick ups and drop offs difficult. He acknowledged that the site is tight, and space is limited but noted the importance of providing functional accessible parking spaces.

Gretchen Siedel, 1111 S. Waukegan Road, stated that a four story building is a real concern. She noted that there are no other apartment buildings in Lake Forest that are

four stories. She stated that the proposed building will appear out of scale with other buildings in the area and will decrease the quality of life. She stated that the units in the 1111 S. Waukegan Road buildings are condominiums, but the owners have the ability to rent out the apartments. She stated that rental of the units has resulted in some lack of maintenance issues. She encouraged the Plan Commission to carefully consider the intent of the Comprehensive Plan. She stated concern about the potential congestion at the proposed Starbucks with two drive through lanes, parked cars, bicycles, and pedestrians. She stated that crossing the intersection is challenging now for pedestrians. She stated that the site plan appears cramped with potential safety issues that will not be easily solvable after the development is built. She encouraged the Commission to consider the site as an overall plan because of the limited access, circulation, and parking. She asked that this site be given the same careful consideration as sites on the east side of Lake Forest. She recognized that the site has been vacant for some time but noted that there is still debris on the 1111 property from the demolition of the Pasquesi building. She asked that the condition of the site be addressed while the planning is underway.

Elizabeth Springer, 1085 Mar Lane Drive, expressed concern about the proposed height of the apartment building. She stated that the trees proposed along the shared property line to the east will likely not thrive due to sunlight being blocked by a four story building. She stated that traffic in the area is heavy at times making the intersection difficult for pedestrians. She noted that some of the units as proposed have multiple bedrooms and may be occupied by families with children who would benefit from some green space on the site.

Jill Kaz, 1045 Mar Lane Drive, stated that there is considerable traffic congestion on Everett Road, particularly westbound, when school is out which make turns into and out of the driveway on Everett Road difficult. She stated concern that drivers exiting the development on to Everett Road who want to head west or south may quickly learn that turning eastbound on to Everett Road and cutting through the Lake Forest Chateau development on Mar Lane is a better option than waiting to turn left on to Everett Road. She stated that the Lake Forest Chateau development is not set up to handle cut through traffic.

David Heckler, 1066 Franz Drive, expressed concern about the proposed height of the building noting that it is nearly double the height of the existing two to two and a half 2 building to the south. He stated support for development overall project but noted that the site is challenging because it is tight for the uses proposed. He agreed with the concern about increased cut through traffic in the Lake Forest Chateau development noting that there are many walkers in the neighborhood and there are no sidewalks. He agreed that the development was not designed to be a through connection from Everett to Waukegan Roads.

Hearing no further public comment, Chairman Dixon invited follow up questions from the Commission.

In response to questions from Commissioner Davie, Ms. Czerniak reviewed the planned improvements planned by IDOT at the intersection of Waukegan and Everett Roads separate from the proposed development. She confirmed that IDOT is working through the project design, working with Metra, and working to acquire property. She stated that there is no time frame for when the intersection improvements will move forward.

In response to questions from Commissioner Pasquesi, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that the intersection improvement plans include the addition of a right turn lane on Everett Road, at Waukegan Road. She stated that IDOT approval of access from the development site on to Waukegan Road is required but noted that the two access points reflected on the plan from Waukegan Road are consistent with IDOT's previous approvals.

In response to questions from Commissioner Nehring, Mr. Petera reviewed the locations of the four accessible parking spaces on the plan presented. He noted the potential location for a fifth accessible parking space in front of the 1025 Everett Road building. He confirmed that there will be a drop off area on the east side of the multi-family residential building.

In response to questions from Commissioner Nehring, Mr. Frigo confirmed that auto turn studies to demonstrate adequate circulation routes for fire trucks and other large vehicles is currently underway.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Dixon invited a response to public testimony by the petitioner.

Mr. Frigo stated that in his opinion, there are sufficient parking spaces on the site as proposed. He stated that the target market is "renters by choice" adding that the building will be designed and built to condominium quality. He stated that it is difficult to finance condominium projects currently because presales are required and are difficult to secure. He stated that financing is currently available for apartments. He stated that the building and site will be well maintained. He acknowledged that the site is challenging because of the size, configuration, and access. He noted however that the project needs to be economically viable and stated the project is not financially viable with a building of less than four stories in height. He stated that it would be good for the site to be productive again and the availability of a new housing product in the area would be beneficial to the community. He stated that the property owner is trying to make the site work but there are financial considerations. He stated that the Commission offered constructive comments and they will be considered. He stated that in the future, a corner element will be designed but noted that the utility boxes and the right-of-way need for the IDOT improvements will need to be considered. He stated that the plan will be designed so that people outside the coffee shop feel safe from traffic. He acknowledged that the architecture and massing of the coffee shop differs from the previous plan in response to requests from Starbucks. He stated that the coffee shop and residential building are designed to be compatible. He stated that the coffee shop building is proposed at just over 22 feet in height with a chimney that extends to 26 feet.

He stated that the Starbucks delivery trucks will be limited in size to work with the site plan and will be scheduled at off peak times. He stated that the goal of the project is to please the Plan Commission, the petitioners, and the neighbors.

Chairman Dixon stated that the Commission will not take action on the petition at this time and noted that the public hearing will remain open. He acknowledged that a strong development team was put together with the intention of creating a quality development on the site. He agreed that developing the site with a strong gateway element would benefit the community adding that has been the objective of the City for 15 years. He noted however that in his opinion, the plan now presented trying to achieve too much for the site. He encouraged the petitioner and development team to consider balancing the intensity of the proposed development with the limitations of the site itself including parking, on site circulation, ingress/egress, and building height in the context of the surrounding area. He questioned whether four or five accessible parking spaces is sufficient for the overall site given the medical office and multi-family residential use. He stated that the off site parking could be workable for employees of the office building but will not support the parking demand generated by the multi-family residential building.

Commissioner Davies encouraged the petitioners to revise the plan based on the comments and concerns raised and expressed interest in seeing how the comments are addressed in a modified plan.

Commissioner Pasquesi noted that there will not be a solution for the site that works for everyone. He stated that exceptions will need to be made to allow a plan that both fits the site and is economically viable to move forward. He acknowledged that removing a floor of the residential building may make the project economically unviable. He agreed with the comments offered by the other Commissioners. He stated serious concerns about the height of the building and the access on Everett Road. He noted that the narrow drive on the east side of building C could be an issue with many large vehicles in the community. He noted he is less concerned about the number of parking spaces provided. He stated that he would like to see the site redeveloped with a plan that works. He stated that all parties will need to compromise to get the site developed.

Commissioner Moorhead agreed with the comments of the other Commissioners. He encouraged the petitioner to resolve the items raised by the City Engineer. He stated that the increase in the building height from 49 feet to 54 feet is not insignificant adding that the balconies on the exterior of the building in combination with the height is too much. He noted concern about the adequacy of parking on the site for residents and guests and respectfully asked that consideration be given to underground parking. He noted that the City recently approved a smaller multi-family residential building with underground parking. He clarified that he is not suggesting that all of the spaces be provided underground but stated that some combination of underground and surface parking would benefit the overall site plan and the quality of the development. He pointed out that with three bedroom apartments, it would be unusual to not anticipate that there will be some families with children. He noted that no green space is provided

on the site to accommodate families. He asked that pedestrian access through the site be further clarified and detailed. He pointed out that it is not the Commission's purview to consider the financial feasibility of a development but to assure that the development functions well and is in the best long term interest of the overall community. He recognized the financial limitations of the site.

Commissioner Pickus agreed with the comments of the other Commissioners. He noted concerns in particular about the onsite circulation, the cul-de-sac near the coffee shop, and what appears to be about 80% impervious surface coverage on the site. He noted that the current site plan does not offer an opportunity for green space to soften the site and align with the concept of a campus environment.

Commissioner Nehring also agreed with the comments of the other Commissioners. She stated concerns about vehicle and pedestrian safety and concerns about the plans to accommodate daily parking needs with offsite parking. She stated that in her opinion, the lack of adequate parking on the site is a significant concern along with the narrow drive lane on the east side of the existing office building which, as currently proposed, is the only access to the larger site from Everett Road. She noted that traffic on Everett Road is heavy at certain times. She stated that the proposed height of the building is a concern noting that other buildings along Waukegan Road may reach the proposed height, but only with decorative elements such as a clock tower, not with the entire mass of the building. She noted concern about public safety access through the site as well. She stated that in her opinion, the plan as proposed is too much for the site.

Chairman Dixon encouraged the petitioner to consider the comments and concerns voiced by the Commission and the public and modify the site plan. He commented that the previous plan seemed to work much better.

Consideration of the petition was continued.

4. Additional public comment on non-agenda items

There was no additional public comment presented on non-agenda items.

5. Additional information from staff.

Ms. Czerniak noted that there will likely be an October meeting for a proposed restaurant in the Central Business District.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Czerniak
Director of Community Development