

**CITY OF BATAVIA  
PLAN COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 25, 2017**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Tom LaLonde, Chair; Gene Schneider, Vice-Chair; Commissioners Tom Gosselin, Sara Harms, Joan Joseph, and Sue Peterson

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Drew Rackow, Planner; Jeff Albertson, Building Commissioner; Laura Newman, City Administrator; Joel Strassman, Planning and Zoning Officer; Scott Buening, Community Development Director,; and Chris Aiston, Economic Development Consultant

**3. ITEMS/REMOVED/ADDED/CHANGED**

None.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

LaLonde noted that on Page 5 of the minutes of the January 4, 2017 meeting, under Lance Zahner, 5<sup>th</sup> line, a referenced statement was not made by LaLonde. He believes this was the applicant's statement.

**Motion:** To approve the minutes of the January 4, 2017, as amended per LaLonde's correction.

**Maker:** Schneider

**Second:** Joseph

**Voice Vote:** 6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Absent. All in favor. Motion carried.

**5. ONE WASHINGTON PLACE DEVELOPMENT – 111-133 East Wilson Street and 20 North River Street, 1 North Washington**

LaLonde stated that this evening there is only one topic and that is the continuation of discussion for the One Washington Place Development. LaLonde further noted there has been a lot of information from the applicant, the Staff, as well as two (2) public meetings. The public hearing is closed. There is no additional opportunity for the public to speak at the meeting tonight. All comments should be directed, in writing, to the City of Batavia.

David Patzelt, Shodeen Group, 77 N. First St. Geneva, Illinois 60134, is representing the applicant, 1 N. Washington LLC. At the last meeting, the Shodeen Group was asked to prepare a

three dimensional drawing of the project. This drawing was to include photos from Houston Street looking at the proposed project, views of Wilson Street from Route 25, views from North River looking towards the proposed project, etc.

Don McKay, Nagle Hartray Architecture, gave an updated presentation of the project. This presentation included photographic images with the use of Google Earth, which included many street views north, south, east and west looking towards the project. Within these slides was a yellow depiction of the proposed project in order to show the mass and scale from all the various locations. These photos also show the tower at the corner of Washington and Wilson, which was not in some of the previous drawings. McKay noted that there were questions in the past regarding swapping the balcony positions with one of the corner room locations. Typically, the end of the building consists of 2 two-bedroom units, which features a corner dining room. This configuration opens up the unit and is a very desirable feature. There are 9 of these corner dining rooms within the complex. McKay demonstrated the various views with the 3D model.

Strassman stated that the purpose of the meeting tonight is to have the Plan Commission make its recommendations on the amendments to the Zoning Map for the Planned Development Overlay and the Downtown Building Height Overlay, and additionally for the Plan Commission to continue the Design Review. Staff continues to support the project. A number of studies have been prepared and results have been positive to include economic development, parking, and negligible effects to downtown traffic. Staff also agrees with the Historic Preservation Committee's opinions, which includes the appropriateness of the project, design ascetics and fit into the downtown. Strassman gave the Commission an overview of their options at this time.

Staff recommends the elimination of the Downtown Building Height Overlay District in regards to this project as well as the Planned Development. Staff also recommends that the Commission approve the findings in the positive as outlined in the Staff memo to the Commission dated December 30, 2016. Staff recommends that the Plan Commission recommend that the City Council approve the Amendment to the Zoning Map to Eliminate the Downtown Building Height Overlay District. Staff also recommends that the Plan Commission recommend the City Council approve the Amendment to the Zoning Map for the Planned Development Overlay District for One Washington Place with the following modifications and conditions:

- A. Modification to Zoning Code Sections 2.405.A and B to allow reduced vision glass coverage and wall penetrations;
  - B. Modification to Zoning Code Table 4.204 to allow fewer than required number of parking spaces;
  - C. Modification to Zoning Code Section 4.205.D to allow parking space and parking space and aisle geometry less than required;
  - D. Other minor Zoning Code modifications necessary to implement the project;
  - E. City Council approval of all demolition COAs for existing buildings/structures on the subject properties;
  - F. Final Staff approval of building elevation and landscape plans.
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Strassman requested, as per Staff's recommendation, that the Plan Commission continue the Design Review consideration for One Washington Place to March 15 or another meeting. This continuation will allow time for City Council action upon the Planned Development and give the requestor some time to revise the plans accordingly.

LaLonde agreed that the Design Review should be continued as it will take some time to review. He further stated that the overwhelming comments reference this project concern the overall scale, parking and traffic issues. This project has the potential to be the most significant project in the downtown area due to magnitude of the project and the impact to the downtown. As such, the City needs to make sure that everything is done right to make this into a development that the City is proud of. Discussion was opened to the Commissioners.

Schneider inquired if staff could locate similar complexes with similar parking arrangements. (this project does not have designated parking for residents) Strassman reported that he had contacted several municipalities, however, none have the same kind of parking arrangements. Buening stated that there are some similar situations in Chicago, however, nothing exactly like what is being proposed here. Patzelt stated that this would be the only development that they (Shodeen) have completed that does not include designated parking spaces for residents. Schneider voiced concerns about a development this size that doesn't have designated parking for its residents. Most residents own more than one vehicle. The ratio of units to parking is 1.88, which is higher than most Shodeen projects. Buening stated that residents that live within the downtown mixed used district that do not have their own parking may apply for a parking permit. (Note: The City of Batavia has an ordinance against overnight parking in the City garage and this permit exempts the resident from being ticketed.) If residents do have their own parking area, they do not qualify for this permit. The parking garage is open to anyone during the day.

Buening reported that the City has purchased the Larsen-Becker property. The City's intention is to demolish the buildings on the west side of the property and convert this area into a temporary parking area for approximately 110 vehicles. The purpose for this temporary parking area is to replace the parking that will be lost during the construction. Parking would remain for a time after the construction is complete to determine what, if any, impact there is on parking in this area. If it is found that the demand for parking is greater than the parking studies, this lot may provide adequate parking to the area. This area is designated for redevelopment in the future. Schneider stated he is still concerned that, especially during the weekends, it is very difficult to find parking and for residents to not be able to park near their homes is unacceptable. It was noted that the parking study found that during the lunch time hours is when parking is at a premium. Discussion continued on where guests of residents will park, increased parking in front of the neighboring residents, residents of this project having to walk several blocks and the after hour safety issues that come with this, where are the business customers and workers going to park, don't want to see residential areas over loaded with vehicles, etc.

Patzelt reported that they have owned, developed, built and managed over 1000 apartments in the Fox Valley area (mainly Geneva & St. Charles), and have continued to manage and built apartment complexes with underground parking as well as service parking. They have no

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objection and have no fear, because of their past experience, as to what, if any, parking problems will exist once this complex is 100% occupied. Their experience from their other communities has not shown a parking problem for the residents. They predominately look at 1.0 as the unit to parking ratio so they don't believe that they will have a parking issue with this project. They also include an additional .25 for visitors so the normal ratio is 1.25 and this project is at 1.88. Projects in Geneva started out with the 1.25 ratio and were reduced to 1.0 when it was discovered that 1.0 was a more realistic ratio. Joseph voiced concerns that many of the units would house residents with more than one vehicle. Patzelt reported that this type of project is more desirable to older residents and/or a single vehicle family. Some of the residents may not even have vehicles. The over 100 units in the Mill Creek complex were built with the 1.0 parking ratio. The complex is 95% filled and no parking issues have arisen.

Discussion was held on other complexes with underground parking, underground public parking, business owners/operators sharing underground parking, commercial use of this parking area, having an experienced developer like Shodeen, etc. Question asked what, if any, mechanism will be in place if a parking issue does arise. What are the City's plans to resolve this problem? Buening stated that short term, the City cannot dedicate any parking spaces to the residents until the TIF funds are paid off, which would happen in 23 years. Because TIF monies are being used for this parking structure, the City cannot dedicate any of this area for any type of private use. It must be reserved for public use. Once the bonds are paid off, the City, in theory, could sell the parking garage to the development or allow reserve spaces to the individual apartments. The Larson-Becker lot may also be utilized for overnight parking (with the purchase of an overnight parking permit). Patzelt stated that they would not ask for reserved parking because they believe it would be an inefficient use of the space. Discussion continued reference overnight parking permits, the request for less parking spaces from 402 to 348, smaller parking space areas, the scale of the project to include the height, height of projects in Geneva, prospects of filling the retail spots based on other projects not being filled after several years, residential units being 95% to 100% in approximately 3 years, the Larson-Becker property being utilized as development and not parking, etc.

Commissioner Peterson presented some photos of various buildings built by the Shodeen Corporation. These photos included resident/retail buildings, parking structures, apartment complexes, etc. Discussion was held on the variances needed for building in Geneva, length of time before projects began, height, retail options, sheer mass of the project in Batavia, etc. LaLonde also presented photos of various lines of this project from different points of view. This presentation included a mock-up of the proposed project to show the size and mass against the existing structures. Discussion continued. LaLonde recommended the project consider a step down in the height from Washington to River Street, which would mean eliminating some of the units, if it were feasible. Although he finds the façade of the Washington Street portion of the project successful, feels that Wilson and State Streets are too flat/boxy. Would like to see more interplay to mass the size of the building, shadowing with balconies in and out, and a reduction in building height. Believes a development like this would benefit the downtown. The members paused to review various 3D adaptations of the different elevations from different angles.

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McKay gave a brief overview of the mechanics, materials and design of the units. He further stated that they are trying to be very careful about improving the aesthetic character of the building. The gable roofs and balconies help to break up the roof line so you do not see a continuous straight line. Touches such as the corner dining rooms are what makes a project like this successful. Discussion was held on the various elevations, creating uniqueness, views from the upper units, etc. Concerns voiced included the mass and scale, density, the project not being financially feasible if the number of units is reduced, reduced parking with reduced units, maintaining the character of Batavia, the effect on the businesses on River Street once construction begins, increased traffic, and reduction in property values. It was noted that during construction, the streets will remain open so as to minimize the impact on the existing businesses. It is not believed that this complex will generate many families with children. A complex like this might also be very favorable to potential Fermilab workers as there is a new project on the horizon, which could possibly bring upwards of 2000 new workers into the area. Discussion continued.

Strassman gave an overview on the parameters of the Downtown Building Height Overlay and what the requirements of this overlay dictate. Staff recommends eliminating the Downtown Building Height Overlay for this project to simplify the approval process.

**Motion:** To approve the One Washington Place Zoning Map Amendment Findings of Fact in the positive.

**Maker:** Joseph

**Second:** Gosselin

**Roll Call:** Gosselin – Aye, Harms – Nay, Joseph – Aye, LaLonde – Aye, Peterson – Nay, Schneider – Aye. 4 Ayes, 2 Nays, 0 Absent. Motion carried.

**Motion:** To recommend to the City Council to amend the Zoning Map to Eliminate the Downtown Building Height Overlay District.

**Maker:** Joseph

**Second:** Schneider

**Roll Call:** Gosselin – Aye, Harms – Nay, Joseph – Aye, LaLonde – Aye, Peterson – Nay, Schneider – Aye. 4 Ayes, 2 Nay, 0 Absent. Motion carried.

**Motion:** To recommend to the City Council an amendment to the Zoning Map for the Planned Development Overlay for One Washington Place with the following modifications to the Zoning Code and conditions:

- A. Modification to Zoning Code Sections 2.405.A and B to allow vision glass coverage and wall penetrations (entries) below required;
  - B. Modification to Zoning Code Table 4.204 to allow fewer than the required number of parking spaces;
  - C. Modification to Zoning Code Section 4.205.D to allow parking space and parking space and aisle geometry less than required;
  - D. Other minor Zoning Code modifications necessary to implement the project;
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- E. City Council approval of all demolition COAs for existing building/structures on the subject properties;
- F. Final Staff approval of building elevation and landscape plans.

**Maker:** Joseph

**Second:** Schneider

**Roll Call:** Gosselin – Aye, Harms – Nay, Joseph – Nay, LaLonde – Aye, Peterson – Nay, Schneider – Nay. 2 Ayes, 4 Nays, 0 Absent. Motion failed.

**Motion:** To continue the Design Review to March 15, 2017, if necessary.

**Maker:** Harms

**Second:** Peterson

**Roll Call:** Gosselin – Aye, Harms – Aye, Joseph – Aye, LaLonde – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Schneider – Aye. 6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Absent. All in favor. Motion carried.

The Commission gave the developer the following suggestions:

- Reduce the sheer mass of the project
- Step down the roof line
- Scale back floors/remove entire floor

Patzelt asked that the members provide them with more detailed direction on where the project now needs to go. LaLonde suggested that the Commission hold a straw poll of the project in order to get a general consensus.

1. The Commission finds the Washington Street elevation acceptable. It was noted that no variances are required for this design. 5-1
2. The Wilson Street elevation should step down to River (reduce elevation) and increase interest on the elevation itself. Interplay of color and forms. This may mean that some units on the top floors would be eliminated. 5-1
3. The River Street elevation should remove 2 floors at the corner of River and State. Unknown how many units would be eliminated. With the stepping down of the roof line, the upper units would now be either looking at the roof or the possibility of a terrace. State Street elevation would also step down. 6-0

These recommendations may require the removal of anywhere from 10 to 20 units. Members volunteered to work with the developer to give more direction and to help conceptualize some ideas quickly. Patzelt stated that he would like the Committee to be more specific to reduce the number of architectural drawings. LaLonde stated that it isn't so much the reduction in units as it is how many units are required to reduce the mass.

## 6. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

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**7. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, motion to adjourn by Commissioner Harms. Second by Commissioner Gosselin. Voice Vote. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 1, 2017 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Cheryl A. Shimp, Recording Secretary

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