

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
VILLAGE OF NEW LENOX PLAN COMMISSION

Held in the New Lenox Village Hall, 1 Veterans Parkway

Tuesday, June 17, 2014 7:00 p.m.

#14-06-B

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Village of New Lenox Plan Commission was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chairman Mark Muehlnickel.

Chairman Muehlnickel led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call, the following were present: Chairman Mark Muehlnickel, Commissioners Rob Moss, Joan Byerley, Gary Berner, and Terry Schultz.

The following were absent: Commissioner Annette Boyd.

Mr. Muehlnickel announced there was a quorum present for this meeting.

Also present were Community Development Director/Assistant Administrator Robin Ellis, Senior Planner Jeff Smith, and Planner Jennifer Neubauer.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF A REGULAR PLAN COMMISSION MEETING OF JUNE 3, 2014

A motion was made by Commissioner Moss and seconded by Commissioner Berner to approve the June 3, 2014 minutes as presented. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

REQUEST FOR SPECIAL USE FOR A PRELIMINARY P.U.D. PLAT
(Public Hearing)

Lincoln Station Apartments

Matthew Klein / New Lenox Development Company, LLC, Petitioner

Chairman Muehlnickel asked if proper notice was given for this public hearing. Mr. Smith replied affirmatively. Mr. Muehlnickel asked for a motion to open the public hearing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kuchler and seconded by Commissioner Byerley to open the public hearing. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

The public hearing was opened at 7:03 p.m.

At this time, Planner Jenni Neubauer swore in those who wished to speak at the public hearing.

Mr. Matthew Klein of New Lenox Development Company LLC introduced himself and explained that this is a 16.25 acre site located north and east of the New Lenox Fire District Station #1 at U.S. 30 and Prairie Street. He said they are proposing the construction of 312 transit-oriented, residential high-end rental units in 4 buildings at this location. Mr. Klein noted that there is very little rental housing in the area, and that the demand for this product is high. He said the shopping area to the east will be very convenient to the residents of this development as well as the new hospital just a few miles away. Mr. Klein explained that they intend to construct one and two bedroom units, although he said the development will consist primarily of one bedroom apartments, and will be intended for the high-end rental customer.

Mr. David Kennedy of P.P.K. Architects introduced himself, stating that his firm has been involved with other developments in New Lenox and that they will be the project architects for this development. He explained that this is an interesting site that does have its challenges, but will be an exciting project that New Lenox will be proud of for many years to come. Mr. Kennedy explained that Lincoln Station Apartments is a luxury, transit-oriented development that is in close proximity to the Metra line, which is a huge asset in any Chicago suburb. He said they respect the ability to implement sustainable ideas in the design of the project.

Mr. Kennedy referred to a rendering of the development stating that there will be one entrance into the development from Prairie Street. He said there will be four identical buildings sectioned off into west and east sectors. Approaching the site, he said a person will see a detention basin, signage, and landscaping that will take lead to a courtyard between two buildings. Parking at the north end of each building will consist of 46 enclosed stalls on the first floor, with the remainder on-grade. Mr. Kennedy then presented plans of projects, most of them condominium projects which were built between 1999 and 2007 in the Chicago suburbs.

Addressing the Lincoln Station site plan, Mr. Kennedy stated that their intent was to design two enclaves of double buildings that face each other; the third and fourth buildings are at 90 degree angles of each other. He said their goal was to create nice views into the property, diminishing some of the views that look into the railroad tracks. Mr. Kennedy said the clubhouse, which will be the main amenity, is located in the center of the site. He said it will be a one-story building, consisting of between 4,000 and 5,000 sq. ft. with a screening room, party room, outdoor pool, leasing office, and business center, with 9 ft. ceilings, stainless steel appliances, and hardwood floors.

Mr. Kennedy referred to the landscaping plan and stated that the landscape architect company for the project is Design Perspectives. He said Design Perspectives is currently working with Staff to ensure that all of the Village's landscaping requirements will be met. Regarding the architectural plan, Mr. Kennedy stated that it depicts parking and circulation. He said they are

dedicating a small extension of Prairie Street to the Village; while the remainder of the interior roadways and drive aisles remain part of the private property

Mr. Kennedy continued by stating there will be a garden between the buildings that will make an attractive center court as well as a walking path that traverses the site and reconnects behind the Buildings 1 & 2. He said it then connects to Route 30, where a new sidewalk has recently been constructed. He stated that the clubhouse will have its own enclave of parking spaces and parking spaces will also surround Buildings 3 & 4. Mr. Kennedy addressed the typical floor plan of the ground level explaining that there will be a reception area, elevator lobby, workout room, as well as mechanical spaces in each building, and 46 enclosed garage spaces. He explained that there will be 16 units on each floor and the overall mix will be 70% one-bedroom and 30% two-bedroom based on the current market. Mr. Kennedy said the two-bedroom units will consist of about 1,170 sq. ft. and the one bedroom units will consist of 740 sq. ft. He said the floor plans will vary. Mr. Kennedy said the exterior building materials will consist of brick, cast stone, and cement plaster. He noted that each unit will have a balcony.

Mr. Ben Bussman with Webster, McGrath and Albert stated that his company prepared the preliminary plat and the preliminary engineering plans for the property. He referred to the stormwater management grading plan and said stormwater management will be addressed with two basins. Mr. Bussman said flood plain compensation has been provided. Regarding site utilities, he said water will be brought from Prairie Street, looped through the site, and brought back to Route 30 so there will be a full loop of water main for fire distribution and services to the buildings. Mr. Bussman said sanitary sewer was easy because it runs through the middle of the property and has been extended to the retail property across the tracks. He said storm sewer distribution was covered through the grading plan.

Mr. Kennedy advised that signage plans have been submitted to Staff for review. He went over some of the specifics of the signs. Mr. Kennedy noted that some aspects of the photometrics will be changed to accommodate light fixtures.

Mr. Klein said he would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

Mr. Muehlnickel said he would ask for Staff's power point presentation and report first. Mr. Smith began by displaying Staff's power point presentation.

Mr. Smith explained that the petitioner is requesting approval of a Special Use for a preliminary Planned Unit Development plat for about 16.26 acres located north and east of New Lenox Fire District Station #1 at U. S. Route 30 and Prairie Street. He said approval of the request would permit the future development of a transit-oriented development, which would be comprised of 312 upscale apartment units located in 4 buildings as well as a private clubhouse. He said this property is zoned C-2 Community Shopping District in the Village. Mr. Smith advised that the Village's Comprehensive Plan calls for Mixed Use for the subject property and overall, the request is in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and Route 30 Corridor Implementation Plan, which was adopted last year. Mr. Smith advised that the preliminary P.U.D. Regulations require the submittal of a market study. He said the applicant noted that a market study

supporting the addition of 312 upscale apartments to the New Lenox area is near completion and will be submitted prior to Village Board review of the preliminary P.U.D. plat, anticipated for July. He noted that a preliminary market study was submitted to Staff prior to tonight's meeting. Mr. Smith stated that Staff has no concerns with the feasibility of adding 312 upscale apartments to the New Lenox market, but reiterated that a detailed market study will be required before this request goes to the Village Board.

Mr. Smith continued by stating this was submitted as a planned unit development, and as such, there are some deviations to the Village's Zoning Ordinance. He said some deviations deal with the size of the buildings as well as the height of the buildings, but each was appropriate for a transit-orientated development. Additionally, Mr. Smith said there is also a requested deviation to the size of the parking stalls (9 feet by 18 feet), but noted that as this is not a commercial retail development, this request was reasonable for this type of residential development. Mr. Smith communicated that a significant deviation involves the proposed parking requirement. He said they are proposing to provide for 1.75 spaces per unit; he said Staff is recommending 2.0 spaces per unit, but in anticipation of needing more parking, the plan proposes to land-bank parking that will result in 2.0 spaces per unit, if needed. He said Staff is asking for Plan Commission comments on the provided parking issue.

Mr. Smith explained that in order to justify the proposed parking as well as the proposed density of this development, Staff is recommending that the mix of 70% one-bedroom and 30% two-bedroom units be included in the P.U.D. ordinance. He said this type of development tends to have fewer school children and less dependence on automobiles.

In terms of transportation, Mr. Smith stated that Prairie Street will be the main access into this development. He explained that a secondary access will be provided by a curb cut into the Metra parking lot as required by the New Lenox Fire Protection District. Mr. Smith said a fire truck study and ladder truck study are required and Staff is working closely with the Fire District to be sure the petitioner meets all of their requirements. He explained that the developer will be required to install grass-crete along the narrow side of three of the apartment buildings in order to provide fire truck access to all portions of the buildings. Mr. Smith noted that at final P.U.D. approval, Staff will need more information on the management group that will be responsible for the maintenance of the buildings as well as the common areas.

Mr. Smith concluded by stating that overall, it is Staff's position that the Plan Commission adopt the findings of fact for the proposed Lincoln Station Apartments preliminary P.U.D. plat as stated in the Staff Report.

Additionally, Mr. Smith stated that Staff recommends approval of the Special Use for a preliminary P.U.D. plat for Lincoln Station Apartments, subject to preliminary engineering and landscape plan approval, and resolution of the other issues noted in the Staff Report.

Mr. Muehlnickel asked if there were any questions or comments of Staff.

Hearing none, Mr. Muehlnickel asked if there were any questions or comments from the public.

Mr. Bill Maloney, of 2009 Beemy Street, Lockport, IL said he is present in the capacity of Will County's appointed representative to the Metra Citizens Advisory Board. He said Will County has 26 municipalities and New Lenox is only one out of six that has direct Metra service. Mr. Maloney said there is high demand for this type of development, which is ideal for people who work downtown.

Mr. Muehlnickel asked what materials will be used for the clubhouse. Mr. Kennedy replied that the clubhouse will be constructed of mostly masonry with some stucco. Mr. Muehlnickel said it is obvious that this company is experienced in developing this type of transit-oriented development. He said it appears they have met the Village's expectations. Mr. Muehlnickel asked for clarification on the interior traffic pattern. Mr. Smith explained they were initially proposing a one-way traffic circulation within certain portions of the site. He said as there is room for two-way traffic circulation within particular areas, Staff recommends the plan to be modified from one-way to two-way traffic flow. He said this comment was recently presented to the developer, and they had no objection.

Mr. Berner said he heard the term "mixed use" in this presentation and asked if this is considered a "mixed use" development. Mr. Klein said the project could be considered "mixed use", but this development is primarily residential, with commercial development nearby. Ms. Ellis interjected that this project will have no visibility from Route 30 and no direct access from Route 30. She added that 312 residential units are unlikely to support any commercial use.

Mr. Berner asked about the 6-story building height and if this is allowed in the C-2 Zoning District. Mr. Smith answered that this does exceed the height requirement in the C-2 Zoning District, however, he said this will be a P.U.D. with an underlying zoning of C-2, and the proposed building heights are not uncommon for a T.O.D. Mr. Klein added that the height of the buildings should not impact the surrounding development. Mr. Berner asked if the building heights will affect the look of the Sanctuary Golf Course. Mr. Klein replied that due to the topography, he is unsure that the buildings will even be visible from the golf course property.

Regarding parking, Mr. Berner noted that if the Metra parking lot can be used for overflow parking, does this mean that commuters will use the apartment parking lot. Mr. Klein answered that a professional management company will be on site at all times and they will be monitoring the parking situation.

Regarding the ratio of 70% one-bedroom units and 30% two-bedroom units, Mr. Klein said he would like more flexibility in those numbers and would prefer a ratio of 65% one-bedroom units and 35% two-bedroom units. Mr. Berner asked if the market study indicates vacancy rates in the area. Mr. Klein said the study indicates a 3% vacancy rate. He said he does not anticipate higher vacancy rates due to the close proximity to the Metra line and medical facilities in the area.

Mr. Berner commented that as this is a high end development, he would like to see more outdoor amenities such as tennis courts, putting greens, basketball pad, etc. Mr. Klein said tennis courts are a possibility, but the development is pretty typical with regard to outdoor uses.

Mr. Schultz asked if the apartment buildings will be sound-proofed in order to reduce the noise from train horns or emergency vehicles exiting New Lenox Fire Protection District #1. Mr. Kelly said he is not aware of any Village amendment or ICC code that would address this issue. He said the new energy codes have very restrictive envelope requirements that include heavier insulation, better moisture barriers, better soundproofing, and high quality windows.

Mr. Moss asked if there will be in-unit laundries, and Mr. Klein responded affirmatively. Mr. Moss asked if pets will be allowed, and Mr. Klein replied they will be allowed, but with a size limit. Mr. Moss said his preference would be that pets are not allowed. Someone asked about air conditioning units and Mr. Kennedy explained that each unit will have its own air conditioning unit and thermostat, but the details still have to be worked out. He said the units will most likely be placed next to the balconies, but would not be visible from the outside. He asked about the possibility of these apartments being converted to condos in the future. Mr. Kennedy said this is always a possibility. Regarding outdoor amenities, Mr. Kennedy said he did not mention that the site plan depicts a picnic area as well as a play area on the property. He added that there is a grade change that is somewhat challenging when it comes to planning for additional outdoor amenities.

Mr. Muehlnickel stated that Staff would like two parking spaces per unit; Mr. Smith explained that Staff would like to have the ability to have two spaces in the future, and recommended that this language be included in the P.U.D. ordinance. Mr. Muehlnickel said the ability to have two parking spaces makes sense.

Mr. Muehlnickel said he was somewhat surprised to hear that the projected ratio of one bedroom to two bedrooms for this proposed development was 70/30 or 65/35. He asked if this ratio is typical. Mr. Klein said this is typical, based on demographics. Mr. Muehlnickel asked what the length of time a typical lease is, and Mr. Klein replied that will be an annual lease.

Mr. Schultz asked if any of the projects depicted in the initial presentation were converted into condominiums. Mr. Klein answered that they were constructed as condos. One of the commissioners asked why the units in Lincoln Station will be rental units instead of condos. Mr. Klein replied that the market has changed since the downturn in 2008, and other than downtown Chicago, the market is more supportive of multi-family housing. Mr. Klein said he believes this development will attract tenants that have a tie to the community.

Mr. Muehlnickel advised that this is a perfect location for this uniquely shaped parcel.

Mr. Mike Hickey of 1009 W. Haven Avenue, New Lenox, stated that this is an ideal spot for this development. He said there is a need for higher-end apartment units. He asked if there will be any phasing of the construction of the buildings. Mr. Klein replied that the construction will take place in two phases; he said two buildings and the clubhouse will be built in Phase 1 and the

remaining two buildings will be built in Phase 2.

Ms. Janice Neff of 14911 Crystal Springs Court, Orland Park, introduced herself and said she is the owner of old Statuary. She said the proposed changes to the area have been a long-time coming and what a sore spot it has been. Ms. Neff has viewed the plan and is anxious to see it commence. She said she has been in contact with Mr. Klein to see if they can make something happen.

Mr. Muehlnickel asked for a motion to close the public hearing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Berner and seconded by Mr. Schultz to close the public hearing. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

The public hearing was closed at 8:04 p.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kuchler and seconded by Commissioner Byerley to approve the findings of fact for the proposed Lincoln Station Apartments preliminary P.U.D. plat as stated in Staff's Report.

Upon Roll Call, the vote was:

AYES: - Commissioners Berner, Byerly, Kuchler, Moss, Schultz and Chairman Muehlnickel

NAYS: - None.

Motion carried.

A motion was made by Mr. Kuchler and seconded by Mr. Schultz to recommend to the Village Board approval of the Special Use for a preliminary P.U.D. plat for Lincoln Station Apartments, subject to preliminary engineering and landscape plan approval, and resolution of the other issues as noted in Staff's Report.

Upon Roll Call, the vote was:

AYES: - Commissioners Berner, Byerley, Kuchler, Moss, Schultz, and Chairman Muehlnickel

NAYS: - None.

Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Smith stated that the next Plan Commission meeting will be held on July 1, 2014.

Mr. Muehlnickel asked for an update from the retail convention in Las Vegas. Ms. Ellis reported that this was her third year of attending, and that people seemed more serious this year. She said that in previous years, people would come to the booth to get information on distressed properties or properties that were in foreclosure. Ms. Ellis said that this year, there were more end-user retailers talking to them about New Lenox. She said there was a lot of interest shown in the area near the hospital. She stated that In-Site was there promoting their Vancina Lane property. Ms. Ellis said there were also grocery chains similar to Mariano's looking for locations as well as gas stations looking for locations near the hospital.

Mr. Muehlnickel asked if there was any interest from mall developers for property located on the north or south sides. Ms. Ellis said Zarembo Development was also at the convention and were trying to pick up the pieces of the outlet mall. She said the Village is optimistic that something may happen in that area.

Mr. Schultz asked if the Village has a division that deals with new car dealerships or car makers. Ms. Ellis explained that Will County Center for Economic Development is the primary contact, and they reach out to member municipalities to submit sites. She said depending upon the use, the Village must demonstrate that it can provide infrastructure for the use.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Muehlnickel asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kuchler and seconded by Commissioner Byerley to adjourn. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

Patricia Hansen – Senior Administrative Secretary