

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 8, 2024

The North Chicago Planning & Zoning Commission met on Monday, July 8, 2024, at 6:05 P.M. at 1850 Lewis Avenue in Council Chambers.

I. Call to Order/Attendance

Present: P. Carballido, A. Douglass, A. Jackson, G. Jackson, R. Jones

Staff Present: Taylor Wegrzyn, Director of Economic and Community Development

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. Meeting Minutes for June 24, 2024

Motion by G. Jackson, seconded by P. Carballido, to approve Meeting Minutes for June 24, 2024

Ayes: G. Jackson; P. Carballido; A. Douglass; A. Jackson; R. Jones

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent:

III. Old Business – None

IV. New Business

2024 Comprehensive Plan

Economic and Community Development Director, Taylor Wegrzyn, presented to the Commission. The presentation went over: the purpose for the Plan, steps taken to engage the public, themes within the plan, an overview of chapters, how the Plan will be used, and the unique components included throughout the Plan. There are six theme areas throughout the Plan: Housing & Neighborhoods; Economic Development; Recreation & Green Infrastructure; Mobility & Transportation; Life & Culture; Municipal Services & Utilities. Each of these themes is broken down into existing conditions, aspirations, and implementation strategies. The Plan concludes with a more detailed list and description of implementation strategies. Uniquely, the Plan includes a strategic “pairing” of implementation strategies to foster greater collaboration and consensus building. The Plan is being nominated for the American

Planning Association's annual Daniel Burnham Award for comprehensive plans.

Chairman Jackson asked Director Wegrzyn how the process seemed to go once he joined the staff here in North Chicago. Director Wegrzyn explained that the Lakota Group (the Comprehensive Plan consultants) did seem to be frustrated by the response from City staff at that time and he thought the Plan was going to be much further along than it was. It felt as if the project had stalled, and they were receiving little feedback from the City. Director Wegrzyn speculated that this was largely the result of a transition period between staff members. The City Planner position had been vacant for several months and there was a gap between department heads. The Lakota Group was, however, satisfied with the results from their public outreach and felt that they had a good basis for the Plan.

Commissioner G. Jackson asked if a pilot project along Sheridan Road could be done to show an example of what can be done elsewhere in town. Director Wegrzyn agreed with the approach and noted several types of grants or programs which could be explored further such as façade grants, vanilla box grants, streetscaping improvements, or incubators. He noted that many of these suggestions are incorporated throughout the Plan.

Chairman Jackson mentioned that he was a stakeholder for both the 2016 and 2024 Comprehensive Plans. He expressed that there was a noticeable difference between the two approaches and inquired as to what might have led to the different products. Director Wegrzyn advised that while he was not employed by the City during the drafting of the 2016 Plan, there were certainly some differences. Notably, the 2016 Plan was put together with help from the Chicago Metropolitan Planning Agency (CMAP). CMAP is Chicagoland's regional planning agency and coordinates significant plans across jurisdictions. CMAP is largely a big-picture, regional planning agency, but it also offers plenty of local support such as in the case with the City's update. However, CMAP is a publicly funded organization and provides its services at a free or reduced rate. As such, the group doesn't necessarily have the same motivation or tools to create plans with innovative approaches, attractive formats, or additional third-party content. In essence, the 2016 Plan's approach was more focused on the fundamental elements.

Chairman Jackson asked whether the Plan included anything specific to the Sheridan Crossing site. Director Wegrzyn pulled up a copy of the Plan and showed renderings of two concepts which are included in the Plan. Chairman Jackson asserted that a hotel should be made a priority on the site and would serve as an anchor for attracting other users.

Motion by P. Carballido, seconded by G. Jackson to recommend approval of the 2024 City of North Chicago Comprehensive Plan.

Ayes: P. Carballido; G. Jackson; A. Douglass; A. Jackson; R. Jones

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent:

V. Questions and Comments

None

VI. Public Commentary

None

VII. Adjournment

Motion by P. Carballido, seconded by R. Jones to adjourn the PZC meeting.

Ayes: P. Carballido; R. Jones; A. Douglass; A. Jackson; G. Jackson

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 P.M.