

**AGENDA**  
**PARK FOREST PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

**Park Forest Village Hall**  
**Board Room**

**7:00 P.M.**

**TUESDAY**  
**January 9, 2024**

1. Planning and Zoning Commission Call to Order
2. Review of Minutes
  - a. December 12, 2023 Regular Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting
3. Petitions - None
4. Audience to Visitors
5. New Business
  - a. 2023 Accomplishments Review & 2024 Goals and Objectives
6. Old Business
  - a. Request for a Special Use Permit in the C-2 Mixed Use Zoning District at 350 Main Street
7. Communications
  - a. Member Communications
  - b. Trustee Comments
  - c. Staff Communications
8. Adjournment

Any individual with a disability requesting a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in a public meeting should contact the Village Manager's Office at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting. The Village Manager's Office can be reached via telephone at 708-283-5605 or via email at [athurston@vopf.com](mailto:athurston@vopf.com). Every effort will be made to allow for meeting participation.

**Park Forest  
Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes  
Park Forest Board Room  
Tuesday, December 12, 2023**

**Present:** Chair Vernita Wickliffe Lewis; Vice Chair Marguerite Hutchins; Commissioners Samuel Brooks, Cynthia Burton-Prete, Denise Poston, Doug Price; Trustee Liaison John Moore

**Staff:** Andrew Brown, Assistant Director of Economic Development and Planning, Planning & Zoning Commission Staff Liaison; Sandra Zoellner, Director of Economic Development and Planning

**Absent:** None

**Visitors:** Jane Stover, Carl Stover, Christy Taylor, Eva Conner-Robinson, John Robinson, Blanchie Green, Kelli Keith, Ladon Keith, Thomas Brown, Dawayne Flowers, Quinn Daniels, Brenda Brown

**Call to Order:** Wickliffe Lewis called the meeting order at 7:04 pm.

**Review of Minutes October 10, 2023:**

On page two, the third paragraph requires three corrections and should be rewritten as follows, “Price made a motion to make it a priority to push the Cook County Forest Preserve to continue with the opening of the Forest Preserve as they did in Chicago Heights.”

On page four, under Member Communications, “March 2023” should be changed to “March 2024.”

A motion to approve the minutes with corrections was made by Hutchins and was seconded by Brooks. All in favor. The minutes were approved.

**Petitions:** None

**Audience to Visitors:** None

**New Business:**

- a. Public Hearing: Request for a Special Use Permit in the C-2 Mixed Use Zoning District at 350 Main Street**

**Chair Wickliffe Lewis opened the public hearing at 7:07 pm.**

The meeting commenced with an introductory overview provided by Brown, explaining the purpose of the special use permit and the substantive rationale behind convening this public

hearing. Subsequently, Mr. Marvin Wells, the proprietor of Robbins Development LLC, formally petitioned for a special use permit, seeking authorization for the construction of a multi-family dwelling at the address of 350 Main Street within the jurisdiction of Park Forest. Brown mentioned that it is noteworthy that the public hearing was methodically disseminated to the public domain through meticulous means, including publication in the Daily Southtown Newspaper, conspicuous signage along Liberty Drive, Cunningham Drive, and Main Street on November 21, 2023, and the dispatch of notices to property proprietors residing within a 250-foot radius of the property boundary.

Brown expounded upon Mr. Wells intentions for the .92-acre parcel, articulating a proposal to erect two three-story edifices, each accommodating eight units, thereby aggregating to a total of 16 apartments. The proposed site plan encompassed provisions for 50 parking spaces, comprising four designated as accessible parking slots, and the inclusion of 16 short-term bicycle parking facilities. Notably, it was observed that the site plan did not adhere to the regulatory requirements outlined in the UDO, which mandates the provision of at least one loading facility for multi-family developments exceeding 20,000 square feet in size.

After Brown finished the staff report, the Chair gave the floor to the Special Use Permit Petitioner, Mr. Wells of Robbins Development, LLC. Taking the floor, Mr. Wells underscored his extensive tenure spanning two decades within the realm of home development, embracing both single and multi-family residential projects, particularly in the South Suburbs. He conveyed a resolute commitment to delivering residences of eminent quality to the community of Park Forest.

At this time a point of order was made by Price to ensure that the order of the public hearing would allow the Commissioners to ask questions after public comment. This was made to help ensure that public comments could be included in questions for Mr. Wells from the Commissioners.

**A motion was made by Price for the Commissioners to ask questions after visitors' comments. The motion was seconded by Burton-Prete. All in favor. The motion was approved.**

Burton-Prete asked Mr. Wells about his current development projects in the South Suburbs. Mr. Wells replied that he is presently constructing single-family homes in Phoenix, Illinois, and he recently completed three homes in Robbins, Illinois.

Burton-Prete mentioned that she had attempted to research his company online but had difficulty finding information, so she inquired if he had a website. Mr. Wells clarified that he does not have a website.

Price asked if Mr. Wells also manages the buildings he constructs and, if so, what percentage of his projects he has built and managed independently over the years. Mr. Wells stated that he manages 100 percent of the buildings he constructs.

Price inquired about the percentage of his construction work that is dedicated to commercial versus residential projects. Mr. Wells explained that his focus depends on market conditions, with the current market favoring multi-family units.

Brooks asked Mr. Wells why he chose Park Forest for development. Mr. Wells expressed his preference for working with municipalities that are easy to collaborate with, highlighting the absence of political complications in Park Forest compared to other suburbs.

Brooks then inquired about the main entrances to the buildings and whether there would be elevators. Mr. Wells replied that there will be two (2) entrances on the north and south sides, and the buildings will not feature elevators.

Brooks asked if the units would be market rate or luxury. Mr. Wells indicated that, at present, they would be at market rate.

Poston revisited a question regarding market rates and inquired if there would be consideration for subsidized housing. Mr. Wells clarified that he did not consider subsidized housing and was uncertain about the rent rates for this area.

Poston then asked about the determining factors for choosing 100 percent market rate. Mr. Wells explained that he would consider mortgage rates and taxes in the area.

Poston asked if Mr. Wells was aware of the market rate for Park Forest. Mr. Wells admitted to having only briefly examined the market rate.

Wickliffe Lewis inquired about the loans Mr. Wells is seeking for the development and whether a certain percentage of units must be affordable. Mr. Wells clarified that loans through Freddie or Fannie Mae do not have stipulations requiring a percentage of affordable units.

Once the Commissioners had no further questions, the meeting moved on to public comment. Each public attendee was given the opportunity to speak. Some of the attendees decided to attend but not make a public comment. In total, seven Park Forest residents provided comments about the development. Each public commenter was provided five minutes to comment on the development.

### **Public Comment**

Jane Stover, a Park Forest resident since 1979 and the steward of the historical society since 1985, expressed her concerns about the development of the property located at 350 Main Street. She emphasized that the land and parking lot are currently used for events like Main Street Nights, with the parking lot serving as a crucial resource for individuals with disabilities to access the area without having to walk far from the other parking lot situated in front of the

Village Hall. Jane Stover conveyed her reluctance to lose this space to housing, as it would obstruct the view of downtown, contrary to the goal of reducing parking use. She firmly believed that this development was not suitable for the location.

Christy Taylor, a resident of Legacy Square, voiced her apprehensions about having rental properties in close proximity to their homes. She explained that one of the reasons they purchased their homes was because they were not located near rental properties. Christy Taylor also expressed concerns about potential renters not taking proper care of the property compared to homeowners. Another worry was that the new property might not have a Homeowners Association (HOA) like Legacy Square to enforce rules and ensure property maintenance.

Eva Conner-Robinson, a resident of Legacy Square and a Park Forest resident since the 1970s, shared her initial fascination with the houses being built at Legacy Square, viewing it as an opportunity to continue living in Park Forest. Her primary concern was the maintenance of their common area in the presence of renters.

Brenda Brown, a resident of Park Forest for 43 years, commented on the absence of any mention of past projects undertaken by Mr. Wells' company during his 20 years in business. She also pointed out the perceived lack of a well-defined plan.

Kelli Keith, a resident of Legacy Square, questioned the feasibility of constructing two buildings in the available space. She also noted that these buildings would be right next to her home, potentially obstructing her view of downtown Park Forest.

Ladon Keith, also a resident of Legacy Square, expressed concerns about the limited space and inquired about the equipment that would be used to contain construction debris. He found it peculiar that a contractor with 20 years of experience did not have a web presence.

Blanchie Green, a Park Forest resident, drew attention to the high property taxes in the area and the absence of a local high school. She suggested that there were alternative locations in Park Forest for construction other than downtown Park Forest.

**Once all the public who were willing to speak were finished, Chair Wickliffe Lewis ended the public comment portion of the public hearing and the floor was returned to the Commissioners for discussion.**

Price pointed out that he visited the Illinois Secretary of State website to research Robbins Development, LLC and found that the company's status was involuntarily dissolved. He then asked Mr. Wells how he came up with the idea of constructing 16 apartments, including eight (8) with four bedrooms. Mr. Wells explained that it was his preliminary plan, subject to change if they obtain approval.

Price inquired about the rental market Mr. Wells had analyzed and the target renters he had in mind. Mr. Wells mentioned that the average rent would be \$2,200.00 per unit, and he believed people would rent at that price without difficulty. He also discussed some of the amenities his units would offer, including hardwood floors, stainless steel appliances, and farm sinks.

Burton-Prete emphasized the importance of understanding Park Forest's plans and ordinances that facilitate the application process for developers. She then asked how Mr. Wells determined the need for four-bedroom apartments and whether his company conducted any market research. Mr. Wells clarified that he didn't necessarily rely on market research but rather on what he believed would work.

Burton-Prete inquired if Mr. Wells' plan was fixed or if there would be flexibility. Mr. Wells indicated that the plan was relatively firm but that he was open to input from both residents and Commissioners regarding their concerns.

Poston echoed a fellow Commissioner's sentiment, expressing her agreement that Mr. Wells had not sufficiently researched Park Forest. She stressed the need for a more developed plan that outlines his intentions beyond simply identifying available property.

**A motion to close the public hearing was made by Price and seconded by Brooks. All in favor. The public hearing was closed at 8:46 pm.**

**A motion was made by Burton-Prete to extend the meeting to 9:30 pm and it was seconded by Brooks. All in favor. The motion was approved and meeting end time was extended.**

Burton-Prete expressed her agreement with the residents regarding the .92-acre space, noting that it appears to be a tight fit for two buildings.

Price emphasized the need to examine the underlying zoning for C-2. He mentioned that considerable thought had been dedicated to the downtown area and C-2 zoning, with extensive discussions on strategies to enhance the success of the C-2 area.

Burton-Prete inquired about the parking situation and questioned why the developer was allowed to have nearly 50 parking spaces. Brown explained that the property lines were never updated when the plaza was removed, and minimal changes have been made to the parking lot.

**A motion was made to table the special use permit request for the multi-family development at 350 Main Street to the January 9, 2024, meeting was made by Price and seconded by Hutchins. All in favor. The motion to table the special use permit request was approved.**

**A motion to extend the meeting for 15 minutes was made by Price and seconded by Brooks. All in favor. The meeting was extended for another 15 minutes to 9:45 pm.**

#### **Old Business:**

##### **a. Cook County Forest Preserve and Community Event**

Brown successfully contacted the Director of Planning at the Cook County Forest Preserve. Brown discovered that the former Planner had resigned in June. A new Planner was hired at the

beginning of December, bringing substantial experience in Parks and Planning. This new individual will now oversee the vision planning for Sauk Trail Woods, and he anticipates receiving a response from them soon. Additionally, he communicated with Director of Planning, Chris Slattery, who apologized for the delay in responding to the Commissioners regarding the Forest Preserve and the Forest Preserve's Plan for Sauk Trail Woods.

**b. Annual Training – Sexual Harassment Training**

Brown sent an email regarding the sexual harassment training. Brown let the Commissioners know that if they already completed similar training for their work or another organization, the Village will accept that. Commissioners will need to send the certificate to the Village or they can go online and complete the training with the Village sanctioned website by December 31, 2023. Brown would send a reminder email with guidance on how to complete the training.

**Communications:**

- a. Member Communications:** Hutchins inquired about the progress of the other development company. Brown explained that IFF had initiated the initial rounds of funding. Due to the current interest rates and construction costs, they will need to reduce the number of units by eight (8). Fortunately, they will still be able to maintain the community building. Currently, they are working on resubmitting their building plans, which are nearing their complete review by the Village. Brown noted that some building materials may need to be changed due to cost constraints.
- b. Trustee Comments:** Moore expressed his appreciation for a productive meeting and commended the residents for actively participating in discussions about the development. He also mentioned attending a workshop on short-term rentals and looks forward to sharing the insights he gained in an upcoming meeting.
- c. Staff Communications:** Brown informed the group that he would include the discussion on the special use permit from today's meeting in the agenda for the next meeting scheduled on January 9, 2024. Additionally, he mentioned that the PZC 2023 Accomplishments and 2024 Goals will be addressed.

**Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made by Hutchins and was seconded by Price. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 pm.

# VILLAGE OF PARK FOREST PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

## PUBLIC HEARING SIGN-IN SHEET

<b>Request:</b>	Special Use Permit in the C-2 Mixed Use Zoning District at 350 Main Street	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	12/12/2023
<b>Requestor:</b>	Robbins Development, LLC	<b>Place/Room:</b>	Boardroom

Anyone from the public is asked to sign-in here and indicate if they are intending to speak. Thank you.

Name	Address	Intend to Speak (X)	Do Not Intend to Speak (X)
Ex. Joe Doe	123 Main Street, Park Forest, IL 60466	X	
✓ Jane Stover	102 Willow St	X	
✓ Carl Stover	102 Willow	<del>4/2</del>	X
✓ CHRISTY TAYLOR	455 VICTORY DR.	✓	
✓ Eva Conner-Robinson	408 main st.	X	
John Robinson	408 main st	<del>X</del>	X
✓ Blanchie Green	375 Lakewood <sup>Blvd</sup>		X
✓ Kelli Hersh	438 Victory Circle		X
✓ Kadan Hersh	438 Victory Circle		X
Thomas Brown	285 MINOQUA		X
Darlene Flowers	375 Lakewood		X
Quinn Daniels	43A Victoria Cir		X
✓ Brenda Brown	285 MINOQUA ST	X	

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS & 2024 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**GOAL #1**

Review and act expeditiously to make recommendations on existing and new development proposals.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Review all development proposals and other land use requests as submitted throughout the year.

**TIMELINE**

This is an ongoing goal that will be implemented throughout the year as development proposals are submitted.

**2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- *The PZC considered a Special Use Permit for a 16-unit multi-family development at the corner of Cunningham Drive and Main Street in December 2023. The Planning and Zoning Commission tabled the discussion and recommendation to a January 2024 meeting.*

## GOAL #2

Amend Village's Unified Development Ordinance as needed.

### OBJECTIVES

- Amend the Unified Development Ordinance as needed.
- **Proposed New 2024 Objective:** Amend the Unified Development Ordinance as needed to comply with State and Federal Law

### TIMELINE

This is an ongoing goal that will be implemented throughout the year as requests to amend the UDO are submitted.

### 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- *The PZC considered one text amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance in January 2023 to comply with State Law. The text amendment was to Article VII (Signs) of the Unified Development Ordinance, to remove Auxiliary Yard Signs from Section VII-5.C Temporary Signs with Permit Requirement. The text amendment was recommended for approval to the Board and was subsequently approved by the Village Board.*
- *During the June 2023 Meeting, the PZC considered Short Term Rentals and their effect on the UDO and other Village Ordinances. This item was tabled for further discussion with the Economic Development Advisory Group (EDAG), which occurred in an informal open meeting on September 13, 2023. The PZC is awaiting a formal memorandum for record from the EDAG on recommendations in regard to Short Term Rentals before taking any action.*

## **GOAL #3**

Implement the Priority #2 actions of the *Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development* regarding the Plan for South Western Avenue Annexation.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- Recognize the high importance of preparing for development in this area because it is one of the limited areas for new development in Will County, and it has the potential for attracting development resulting from the South Suburban Airport and the Illiana Expressway.
- Promote new development along South Western Avenue.

### **TIMELINE**

These Objectives should be pursued in the order listed.

### **2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- *No action was taken with in regard to Goal #3 in 2023.*

## **GOAL #4**

Implement the Priority #2 actions of the *Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development* regarding the Plans for the Eastgate Neighborhood.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- Continue to seek grant funds for additional demolition/deconstruction and redevelopment activities.
- Continue to explore with Cook County and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County the ability to develop improved access to the Sauk Trail Woods from 26<sup>th</sup> Street.
- At the time potential development partners are identified, conduct a planning workshop to update the concept plan in the *Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development*.
- Conduct a redevelopment workshop for commercial and/or residential redevelopment, especially as redevelopment relates to the Village of Park Forest.

### **TIMELINE**

These activities will occur throughout 2024 and continue into the foreseeable future.

### **2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- *The Village received two Illinois Housing and Development Authority grants for both occupied and vacant single family homes. The Village received \$400,000 in Home Repair and Accessibility Program Grant funds and \$712,000 in Strong Communities Program Funding. Both grant programs are qualified for use in Eastgate with most of the Strong Communities Program Funding focused on rehabilitation of vacant homes in the Eastgate neighborhood.*
- *The PZC continued its coordination with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC) that started in 2021. The PZC received a presentation from the FPDCC in February 2023 about the FPDCC vision for Sauk Trail Woods. During the October 2023 meeting, the PZC considered an Eastgate Master Plan, but opted to continue to pursue FPDCC and their plans for the adjacent Sauk Trail Woods instead of pushing forward with a formal Master Plan.*

## **2023 GOAL #5**

Implement the Priority #2 actions of the *Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development* regarding the Plans for DownTown Park Forest

## ***Proposed revised* 2024 GOAL #5**

Implement the Priority #2 actions of the *Strategic Plan for Land Use and Economic Development* regarding the Plans for DownTown Park Forest and the recommendations adopted in the DownTown Master Plan.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- Continually market the 2.25 acres of Village-owned land along Main Street for development consistent with the DownTown Gateway Mixed Use Concept.
- Continually market the vacant parking lots and the property at 350 Main Street for development consistent with the DownTown Master Plan.
- *Proposed* Update the DownTown Zoning Map as needed to support recommendations adopted in the 2023 DownTown Master Plan

### **TIMELINE**

These Objectives should be pursued as opportunities arise.

### **2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- *PZC Commissioners convened a public hearing for the DownTown Master Plan in January 2023. The PZC made a recommendation for approval to the Village Board, which subsequently approved the recommendation and adopted the DownTown Master Plan as part of the Comprehensive Plan.*
- *The PZC considered a Special Use Permit for a 16-unit multi-family development at the corner of Cunningham Drive and Main Street in December 2023. The Planning and Zoning Commission tabled the discussion and recommendation to a January 2024 meeting.*

## **GOAL #6**

Pursue opportunities for training of Planning and Zoning Commission members.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- Encourage all Planning and Zoning Commissioners to attend the American Planning Association – Illinois Chapter conference.
- Take the required State of Illinois sexual harassment prevention training.

### **TIMELINE**

These Objectives will occur throughout 2024.

### **2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- *The PZC received a brief from the South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority about the work of the Land Bank in the Village of Park Forest during the March 2023 PZC meeting.*
- *All Planning and Zoning Commissioners are in compliance with the Code of Conduct and are in compliance or in process of coming into compliance with the required Sexual Harassment.*