

CITY OF WARRENVILLE
PLAN COMMISSION/ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
Minutes of Regular Meeting (*via Zoom*)
Held on Thursday, September 24, 2020

A. CALL TO ORDER

Plan Commission Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Ch. Davis explained the two opportunities interested parties would have to provide remarks: (i) public comments and questions during the public hearing would be accepted after the applicant's presentation and Commission's questions, and (ii) the Citizens' Comments item of the agenda.

Per Ch. Davis's request, Pl. Domovessova explained the Citizens' Comments portion of the virtual meeting protocol, including how public comment would be accepted via Zoom and call in, which would include:

1. Public comment from anyone at City Hall;
2. Public comment from anyone participating in the meeting via Zoom with camera; and
3. Public comment from anyone participating in the meeting via phone.

Pl. Domovessova explained all meeting participants should stay muted until they are asked to provide their comment, and start their comment by announcing their name and address. Emailed public comments received prior to the meeting would be read aloud following verbal comments. No public comments were received prior to commencement of the meeting. Individual Commissioner comment would follow. Commissioners and staff members wishing to speak were asked to use the raise hand feature on Zoom, and wait for their name to be called. Presentation materials are available on the City's website.

B. ROLL CALL

PC Present: John Davis, Tim Cosgrove, Robert Pepple, John Lockett, Elizabeth Chapman, Byron Miller, Amit Thaker

PC Excused/Absent: Shannon Burns, Jessica Tullier

ZBA Present: John Davis, Tim Cosgrove, Robert Pepple, Jonathan Lockett, Elizabeth Chapman, Byron Miller

ZBA Excused/Absent: Shannon Burns

Also Present: Community and Economic Development Director Ron Mentzer, Sr. Planner Natalia Domovessova, Planner/GIS Technician Lauren Whetstone, Recording Secretary Marie Lupo

C. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Everton Subdivision / M/I Homes of Chicago LLC
Located east of Route 59, South of Ivan Albright Street, northwest of Illinois Prairie Path
Project No. 2020-0576
Request for approval of variations from the Warrenville Sign Ordinance to increase the maximum number, area, and height of large real estate signs, and to install the signs off-site. The petition, if approved, would allow M/I Homes to install three large real estate marketing signs along the Route 59 frontage of the currently under construction Everton townhomes subdivision.

COM. PEPPLE MOVED, SECONDED BY COM. COSGROVE, TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aye: Davis, Cosgrove, Pepple, Chapman, Lockett, Miller

Nay: None

Absent/Excused: Burns

MOTION ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

Greg Collins of M/I Homes of Chicago was duly sworn in by Recording Secretary Lupo and addressed the Commission, citing the location of the one existing sign on site at the south end of Route 59, adjacent to the detention pond. Due to the breadth and size of Route 59 frontage, coupled with the posted 45 mile per hour speed limit, which is realistically in excess of that speed, interested buyers in the sales office have often claimed they missed current signage. Given the level of construction activity and multiple land uses, it is difficult to ascertain which product is for sale, and which product is available for rent. The request for larger and additional signage is vital to clarify and enhance sales—especially if a site does not have adequate frontage and market windows.

Mr. Collins stated that three signs are proposed in two different sizes. The north and south signs measure 10 feet by seven feet; the middle sign is slightly larger (ten by 14 feet), and contains more information and identifiers to focus on the main entrance of the subdivision. The content may change depending on seasonal current specials. Colors would coincide with M/I's national color campaign. The signs would not be ground-lit.

Mr. Collins acknowledged receipt of the staff report, and expressed his only challenge with its recommendations, i.e., the limitation of having to remove the sign when fewer than six units for sale remain, provided the commercial real estate sign is removed prior to construction on such commercial site, as that time is uncertain. He requested the ability to retain, but relocate, such sign to the south corner for continuing identification purposes, as M/I owns the commercial site, as well.

Com. Cosgrove inquired as to the existing broker sign and flag banners, which would block view and infringe upon placement of the proposed new sign. Mr. Collins replied it would be relocated to the north, now that the stock pile of dirt is almost extinguished, and bike path installation is nearly complete. Additionally, he stated the flag banners are thin and low, and can be moved if necessary.

Com. Cosgrove compared Everton's proposed large sign to the Lexington Homes' site, which continues to experience good sales, despite its smaller signage. He felt a smaller sign would suffice in the Everton location. In addition, he fully expects the apartment complex to request a large sign in the future. Planner Domovessova responded that the ownership of the Everton apartment project has not yet submitted a sign package, but shared initial plans for temporary advertising signage.

Comparing the signage to that of Lexington Trace's, Com. Pepple was not in favor of the large sign, as it would set a bad precedent.

Com. Lockett agreed with Coms. Pepple and Cosgrove. In addition, he felt Sign B will not be visible as a vehicle heads northbound, because it would be located behind the Culvers sign. He suggested the large sign should be the same size as the two smaller ones. Mr. Collins replied that if it is the Commission's consensus, M/I would agree to reduce the larger sign to be equivalent in size to the two smaller signs that are proposed.

Com. Chapman had no further comments other than that which have already been voiced.

Com. Miller expressed that other new businesses are opening in town, which did not receive any signs along Route 59. He felt the proposed size of the large sign is more than double the normal size, too large, not necessary, and would set a precedent.

Com. Thaker inquired as to Mr. Collins' projections for reaching the occupancy level that would require removal of the sign. Mr. Collins replied he would only be guessing, but possibly three years. M/I expected a significant sales decline with the onset of COVID-19. Sales have been slow, but somewhat satisfactory. He disagreed with the comparison to Lexington Trace, which benefits from being on the corner of Butterfield Road and Route 59. Everton's road frontage is four times the size, and has vehicles travelling at a high speed. In addition, the Prairie Path's foliage may screen signage.

There were no comments from the public.

Ch. Davis commented that the Commission's actions rarely set a precedent, as each situation is unique. He felt that if the signs would help move the housing product, the request is acceptable to him—especially since they are only temporary.

Com. Pepple expressed he is highly in favor of the project, and understands the request because of the long frontage of the site. However, he was of the belief that allowing the largest of the signs would set a precedent, and he does not desire to do so. He requested that all three signs measure 10 feet by 7 feet.

Com. Lockett concurred with Com. Pepple as to M/I's highly attractive project and that all three signs should be the same size. He anticipated the apartments would also request a similarly sized large sign, and would not want to set a precedent.

Com. Miller felt three signs is the appropriate number, due to the length of the property. He would agree to allow three, 70-square foot signs.

Com. Chapman concurred with allowing three, 70-square foot signs.

COM. CHAPMAN MOVED, SECONDED BY COM. THAKER, TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aye: Davis, Cosgrove, Pepple, Chapman, Lockett, Miller
Nay: None
Absent/Excused: Burns

MOTION ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

COM. PEPPLE MOVED, SECONDED BY COM. COSGROVE, THAT THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS RECOMMENDS CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF VARIATIONS FROM THE WARRENVILLE SIGN ORDINANCE, WHICH WOULD ALLOW INSTALLATION OF THREE LARGE REAL ESTATE SIGNS ADVERTISING EVERTON TOWNHOMES SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS OUTLINED IN SECTION IV OF THE 9/24/20 STAFF REPORT, WITH THE PROVISIO THAT ALL THREE SIGNS MEASURE 70 SQUARE FEET.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aye: Cosgrove, Pepple, Chapman, Lockett, Miller
Nay: Davis
Absent/Excused: Burns

MOTION ADOPTED.

D. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

None.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Regular Meeting of August 20, 2020

COM. COSGROVE MOVED, SECONDED BY COM. MILLER, TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 20, 2020, MINUTES, WITH THE FOLLOWING CHANGE:

- Page 11, Paragraph 5, Line 1 – Insert “assistant” before “scout.”

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aye: Davis, Cosgrove, Pepple, Chapman, Lockett, Miller, Thaker
Nay: None
Absent/Excused: Burns, Tullier

MOTION ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

F. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ch. Davis spoke of the September 16, 2020 APA-IL Virtual State Conference Plan Commissioner Training, which he and Com. Lockett highly recommended as being very informative. The training stressed the importance of maintaining an updated Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Building Codes.

G. COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dir. Mentzer reported that public information and input meetings would be scheduled this fall regarding potential public improvement projects. In particular, one such meeting will be held

jointly with the Forest Preserve District of DuPage for a potential new trail connection between the Prairie Path on the north and the Warrenville Grove Forest Preserve parking lot on the south, that would be adjacent to the west side of the DuPage River, east of Batavia Road, located almost entirely on Forest Preserve District property in a bypass pumping corridor created and utilized during the thorium clean-up and restoration. This path was envisioned during the 2007 Old Town/Civic Center Subarea process. The intent was not to acquire private property for its location, where possible, but to utilize either Forest Preserve property or City right-of-way—especially now that the City owns the Citgo property.

Another public meeting will take place regarding a potential new trail connection and bridge that will be constructed over the DuPage River in place of the existing Mack Road Bridge. Commissioners are asked to participate, if possible, as the majority of participants at such meetings are typically opposed to such projects because they do not perceive them as a benefit to the community. Ch. Davis inquired as to the new, curvy, Mack Road trail connection that is underway. Dir. Mentzer summarized the trail is designed to take advantage of topography and highlight vistas. It will connect to the Winfield Road/Mack Road intersection sidewalk, but will not extend west of Winfield Road. Com. Miller complimented the Forest Preserve on its design of the path that runs through St. James Farm.

H. SENIOR PLANNER'S REPORT

Per Ch. Davis' request, Pl. Domovessova reported on the status of the 2016 Trailhead Project, which is currently undergoing preliminary engineering review. Plans were submitted to IDOT, which recently returned its first round of comments. Due to COVID-19, projects in IDOT's queue were delayed to bid in July 2022, which would result in construction commencement by September 2022. Due to inexpensive dirt available from the Lexington Trace project, grading has already taken place. Additional information can be found on the City's website here: <https://www.warrenville.il.us/754/Trailhead-Project>.

Due to newspaper legal notice publication requirements, the October 22, 2020, meeting may include Zoning Ordinance text amendments. Results from the Commission's survey on prioritization of proposed amendments are as follows:

1. Residential lot coverage (already authorized by City Council);
2. Parking requirements (already authorized by City Council);
3. Miscellaneous items, including Table 4A (not yet authorized by City Council); and
4. Parking lot lighting (not yet authorized by City Council).

The Homes for a Changing Region Study was authorized by City Council at its September 21, 2020, meeting. The Study involves no-cost assistance from the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, and the Metropolitan Planning Council. It will evaluate existing housing stock in the community, identify key housing-related issues and opportunities, and support informed local housing policy development and decision making about proposed future residential development projects. This four to six-month process will begin in October and requires two volunteers from the Commission. Commissioners Pepple and Cosgrove were selected to be on the workgroup, along with business owners and various other community members. Related documents and reports will be periodically shared with the Commission during the process.

Com. Miller inquired as to the Services and Staffing Study performed last year by Matrix. Dir. Mentzer replied the City Council endorsed the study at its September 21, 2020, meeting, and the Council was pleased with the results and the useful information it generated. The most significant takeaway from the Study was the need for an additional staff member to coordinate communications with the public. A copy of the Study is included on the City's website here: <https://www.warrenville.il.us/DocumentCenter/View/15947/VII-City-Services-and-Impacts-on-Staffing-Needs---Final-Report-PDF>.

The 2020 Census Self Response portal is closing on September 30, 2020. Approximately 17% of Warrenville's population have not self-responded or were not counted by walking communicators. Promotional merchandise that was not used due to COVID-19 event restrictions remains. Commissioners who know of a community entity that can distribute items, such as water bottles, should contact her. Com. Miller inquired whether Warrenville's newly approved housing can be included in the Census, even though it is still not entirely built or occupied. Pl. Domovessova replied there is a process to perform a Special Census, depending upon the extent of households involved. This was considered for the Herrick Woods subdivision after Census 2010. A Special Census is a significant effort that involves monetary costs; however, it is usually very worthwhile.

I. ADJOURN

COM. COSGROVE MOVED, SECONDED BY COM. PEPPE, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:17 P.M.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aye: Davis, Cosgrove, Pepple, Chapman, Lockett, Miller, Thaker

Nay: None

Absent/Excused: Burns, Tullier

MOTION ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

Approved: _____

Marie Lupo, Recording Secretary