

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE VILLAGE OF NORTHBROOK DOWNTOWN ZONING STEERING COMMITTEE

Village Hall Terrace Room

September 30, 2014

Members Present: Chairman Scott Cyphers, Susan Elfant, Steven Elisco, Selwyn Marcus, Lori Jordison

Members Absent: None

Staff & Consultant Present: Tom Poupard (Director, DPS), David Schoon (Assistant Director, DPS), Michaela Kohlstedt (Senior Planner) Leslie Oberholtzer (CodaMetrics), Tony Manno (RTA)

Call to Order & Introductions

Chairman Cyphers called the meeting to order in the Terrace Room of Village Hall at 7:05 p.m.

Public Comment- Hear from the Audience

None

Review of October 24, 2014 Meeting

Member Elisco moved, Member Elfant seconded, to approve the October 24, 2014, minutes as submitted. On voice vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Presentation & Discussion of Proposed Form-Based Regulations for Downtown

David Schoon, Assistant DPS Director, along with the assistance of Leslie Oberholtzer, CodaMetrics, and Tom Poupard, DPS Director, walked the Committee through the current draft of the proposed form based code amendments for the downtown.

Schoon started his PowerPoint presentation regarding the draft form based code amendments by briefly summarizing the proposed new zoning regulating map and six new zoning districts for the downtown. In response to a question from Member Elisco, Oberholtzer explained why the Northbrook Shopping Center was zoned VG3 - Village Green Commercial Center District rather than the VG 2 – General District.

Schoon then summarized the development approval process. He stated that under a form based code, all reviews are handled administratively unless an applicant is requesting a deviation, variation, or exception to the proposed rules, or some other zoning relief. Then either the Architectural Control Commission or the Board of Trustees would be involved with the review of the project. Committee members then discussed the concept of minor deviations for certain specified items, which are handled administratively by staff. Committee member expressed support of this concept and even though it is something we may want to have available for other items in the Zoning Code.

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2 Schoon then reviewed the section of the proposed regulations regarding building forms. He
3 reviewed the five proposed building types (storefront, cottage, stoop, row, and civic). In response
4 to a request by Member Elfant, Schoon and Oberholtzer explained why certain building types were
5 allowed in certain zoning districts and not others. They also explained how a certain building type
6 (e.g. a storefront) may have different requirements depending upon the district.
7

8 Schoon then began to explain the different requirements (e.g. building placement, parking
9 placement, height, uses, and street façade requirements) that give each building type its form.
10 Regarding building placement he summarized requirements such as build to zones, occupation of
11 corner, minimum front line coverage, minimum setbacks, and location for parking. He discussed
12 height & use regulations such as minimum and maximum height of the building as well as
13 individual floors, allowed uses by story, occupied space, and location of parking within a building.
14

15 During discussion of height, Member Elisco questioned whether the range between the minimum
16 and maximum height for each floor was too great thus not ensuring a continuity between
17 buildings along a block frontage. Oberholtzer stated you could definitely decrease the range, but
18 by doing so you reduce flexibility. Member Marcus stated that you may want to have a narrower
19 range to ensure such sites as the C1 properties and the rest of the properties on the former
20 Northbrook Garage block develop in a compatible fashion. Cyphers suggested that we may want
21 to provide greater flexibility, but may want to require all projects in the VG1 go through the ACC.
22 The Committee members discussed how limiting do the regulations need to be in order to achieve
23 the look and feel we want for our downtown. Staff suggested that as the Committee continues its
24 review of the rest of the regulations to keep that question in mind.
25

26 Schoon then reviewed the street façade requirements (e.g. front façade entrance type, principal
27 entrance location, horizontal and vertical divisions, transparency, and roof type).
28

29 Having reviewed the general building form requirements for a storefront building, Schoon then
30 walked the Committee through an exercise of how these requirements would be applied to the
31 vacant lot at 1200 Meadow Road, which is located on the southwest corner of Meadow and
32 Cherry roads.
33

34 Regarding building form requirements, Schoon and Oberholtzer also briefly noted other façade
35 design requirements such as blank wall limitations, interior side and rear façade treatments,
36 materials and colors, windows, awnings and shutters, and balconies.
37

38 Schoon then pointed out the proposed land use section as well as the street and block section of
39 the proposed code amendments. The proposed land use section would not use the SIC Manual
40 classification as the remainder of the Zoning Code currently uses, and which the Village has talked
41 about getting away from. The street and block section discusses the standards in creating a new
42 street through the Meadow Plaza property, the purpose of which is to create an additional
43 vehicular and pedestrian realm that would connect the core part of the downtown with the north
44 part of the commercial area in the downtown.

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2 Schoon reviewed the proposed parking regulations, which would base the number of required
3 parking spaces for a use based upon the Village's standard parking requirements for uses but
4 would allow for adjustments. In the VG1 Core District, a property owner could use the parking
5 standards that currently exist for the special parking area in the Village Green Overlay District. For
6 the remainder of the downtown, the required number of parking spaces could be adjusted
7 downward by such factors as shared reduction, cooperative reduction, on-street parking credits,
8 public parking credits, transit credits, and car-share credits. Member Marcus stated that seemed
9 to be an appropriate approach as some of these factors were considered in the granting of the
10 recent parking variation for his project at 1312 Shermer Road.

11
12 Schoon concluded the review of the proposed form based code regulations by stating the sign
13 regulations would remain the same except that projecting signs would be allowed throughout the
14 VG districts, as they currently are only allowed in the core area, and a new type of pedestrian-scale
15 pole-mounted sign would be allowed in all VG districts.

16
17 Schoon then asked Committee members to reflect on the Village's recent review of the building at
18 1312 Shermer Road. Based upon that experience using the Village's current zoning and design
19 regulations, what are their thoughts about a form based code approach? Members Elfant,
20 Jordison, Cyphers, and Elisco all expressed the opinion that Member Marcus' building was
21 consistent with the draft form-based code regulations. The Village was very fortunate for that
22 fact; because a different developer may not be so thoughtful in with its design. Member Jordison
23 stated that she thought having the form-based code regulations would have provided the
24 applicant a more clear picture of what was expected and could have possibly saved time and
25 effort.

26
27 Schoon concluded his presentation by suggesting the Committee focus on the following questions:
28

- 29 • Does the Committee still support pursuing an overall form-based code modification for the
30 downtown, or should we explore amending existing zoning regulations & design guidelines
31 to encourage redevelopment?
- 32 • If the form-based approach is desired, does the proposal contain a proper balance between
33 requirements ("shall" do) and guidelines ("should" do)?
- 34 • How would the Committee like to approach the Board regarding its preferred approach?

35
36 Member Elisco stated that the form-based code approach is on the right track. We need to create
37 a clearer picture of what we want for the downtown and the form-based code will do that.
38 Member Marcus stated that there are challenges owning property and operating a business in the
39 downtown, but he believes the proposed standards could create more certainty for developers
40 and create a more exciting downtown. Member Cyphers stated that the form based code will set
41 expectations for development and is the right approach. We need to be thoughtful and strategic
42 regarding how to approach the Board with the proposal. He stated the proposed regulations
43 aren't about being the "pretty police" but are about encouraging economic development and
44 prosperity in the downtown. Other members voiced their agreement. Member Elisco stated in

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1 presenting the form based code we need to focus on our vision for the downtown. He added we
2 need to increase residential density and need something to make this happen. Member Elfant
3 agreed and stated the form based code will allow us to increase overall density in the downtown
4 in a way the community can support. The form based code is about creating a vision. Committee
5 members stated that thought has to be given to how the proposal is rolled out to the public and
6 how the development community and property owners are involved in the process. The
7 Committee members also agreed that it would be important and beneficial that they all attend a
8 meeting in which the plan is presented to the Board of Trustees so that the Board can see the plan
9 has the support of the committee.

10

Schedule and Next Steps

11 Committee members will forward their comments regarding the draft code amendments to
12 Schoon, and Schoon will work with Oberholtzer and staff to refine the code amendments. Staff
13 will then bring the draft code amendments back to the Committee to review one more time prior
14 to the Committee making a recommendation.

15

Other Business

16 There was none.

17

Adjourn

18 On motion made by Member Elisco and seconded by Member Elfant, the meeting was adjourned
19 at 9:05 p.m.

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26 Respectfully Submitted –

27 David Schoon