



MEETING MINUTES

LAND USE COMMISSION

Wednesday, January 22nd, 2025

7:00 PM

Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, James C. Lytle City Council Chambers

Members Present: George Halik, Kiril Mirintchev, Chair Matt Rodgers, Myrna Arevalo, Jeanne Lindwall, Darush Mabadi

Members Absent: Max Puchtel, Brian Johnson, Jameika Mangum

Staff Present: Neighborhood Land Use Planner Meagan Jones, Senior Housing Planner Uri Pachter, Planning Manager Liz Williams, Community Development Director Sarah Flax

Presiding Member: Matt Rodgers

I. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Chair Rogers called the meeting to order at 7:01pm

The Chair noted that hearings regarding the Comprehensive General Plan and Zoning Ordinance would differ from regular meetings. These hearings aimed to collect testimony from residents and business owners on the proposed documents.

The meeting focused on the zoning ordinance at a high level rather than specific details. The purpose was to provide staff with input before presenting a final draft to the Commission.

On January 29, the Commission would reconvene to discuss the Comprehensive General Plan, providing direction to staff and answering their questions. This feedback would help finalize the second draft of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Chair invited the Deputy City Manager, Steve Ruger, to address the timeline for these discussions. Mr. Ruger acknowledged that he was still getting oriented in his new role with the city and thanked the Commission for their time and feedback. He addressed the timeline issue, stating that the feedback received at last week's meeting was more extensive than expected. As a result, staff was still working on developing a more detailed timeline and was not yet prepared to present it. However, they aimed to provide an accurate timeline and planned to return at next week's meeting to continue the discussion. Sarah Flax was also available to help answer questions.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing | Text Amendment | Zoning Code - Envision Evanston 2045 | 24PLND-0043

City initiated Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, Title 6 of the City Code, to repeal Chapters 1 through 18 and replace them with the following: Chapter 1 - Definitions, Chapter 2 - General Provisions, Chapter 3 - Zoning Districts, Chapter 4 - Use Standards, Chapter 5 - Development Standards, Chapter 6 - Nonconforming Uses and Structures, and Chapter 7 - Procedures and Administration. The Land Use Commission makes a recommendation to the City Council, the determining body for this case per Section 6-3-4-6 of the Evanston Zoning Ordinance.

B. Public Hearing | Map Amendment | Official Zoning Map - Envision Evanston 2045 | 24PLND-0044

City initiated Map Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, Title 6 of the City Code, to redistrict all properties within the City of Evanston. The new zoning map is part of Envision Evanston 2045 and will remove all existing zoning and overlay districts and replace them with new districts. Interested parties can view the proposed map amendment at www.envisionevanston2045.com to review the proposed zoning for their parcel. The Land Use Commission makes a recommendation to the City Council, the determining body for this case in accordance with Section 6-3-4-6 of the Evanston Zoning Ordinance.

Public Testimony

Patrick Mulhern, an 18-year Evanston resident, thanked the Land Use Commission for its thoughtful approach and for recommending the separation of zoning from Envision Evanston. He expressed concerns about proposed zoning changes along Chicago Avenue, where building heights could increase to 100 feet, arguing that this would not fit the neighborhood's character. He also criticized inaccuracies in the parking assessment and emphasized that zoning decisions should be community-driven. Mr. Mulhern suggested maintaining current zoning heights, possibly allowing a slight increase, but opposed 10-story buildings near single-family homes.

Michael Davis, a resident of 1109 Hinman, supported Patrick Mulhern's concerns and noted that their petition had gathered 82 signatures, with more coming in. He highlighted that the Preservation Commission recommended a maximum height of 40-45 feet on the east side and opposed 100-foot buildings on the west side. Mr. Davis raised concerns about parking congestion, wind tunnel effects, walkability, traffic, and infrastructure impacts, emphasizing the need for careful consideration before approving major zoning changes.

Steve Test, a resident of 1135 Hinman Avenue, opposed the proposed M3 zoning, noting that no other M3 districts on the zoning map are directly adjacent to R1 districts except in this area. He argued that placing M3 zoning next to a historic district is particularly inappropriate. Test urged the commission to remove the M3 zoning proposal entirely before having a proper discussion on suitable zoning for Chicago Avenue.

Eric Swan, a resident of 1126 Hinman, stated that while he and his neighbors support increasing density, it should be done responsibly and sustainably. He opposed the proposed M3 zoning,

arguing that a 100-foot building would cast his property in complete shadow for much of the day. He urged the commission to consider these impacts when making zoning decisions.

Jeff Smith deferred his presentation on behalf of Central Street Neighbors to next week but used his time to critique the comprehensive planning process. He emphasized that zoning should follow a well-developed comprehensive plan, which Evanston currently lacks. He questioned the assumption that increasing housing supply would improve affordability, arguing that market forces and external factors make that unlikely. Mr. Smith also highlighted a lack of critical housing data and pointed out that the real shortage in Evanston is single-family homes, which current zoning discussions do not address.

Scott Roberts criticized the Land Use Commission for removing zoning-related items from the comprehensive plan without proposing replacements. He urged the commission to adopt new language that provides guidance while maintaining flexibility. Mr. Roberts emphasized the need for zoning policies that address housing affordability, racial and economic segregation, displacement, and housing shortages. He also highlighted Judson Avenue as an example of successful mixed-middle housing, arguing that such developments do not lower property values and provide diverse housing options.

Richard Weiland, a longtime resident of Hinman Avenue, expressed concerns about increased building heights and their impact on the neighborhood. He highlighted the potential loss of sales tax revenue if car dealerships along Chicago Avenue sell to developers. Mr. Weiland also criticized the lack of parking in new developments, noting that while public transit is useful for trips to downtown Chicago, many destinations still require driving. He urged the commission to carefully consider density increases and their effects on residents and visitors.

Michelle Chlebek, a resident of the First Ward, expressed concerns about the proposed upzoning plans, arguing that Evanston does not face a housing shortage, citing population decline and a stable vacancy rate. She highlighted that increasing housing won't necessarily improve affordability due to high construction costs, and the plan could further reduce the availability of single-family homes, which many families seek. She recommended focusing on adaptive reuse of existing buildings and targeted density increases rather than broad upzoning.

John Kennedy, a resident of the Third Ward, emphasized the importance of having solid housing data before developing a comprehensive plan. He pointed out that the city's strategic housing plan is on hold due to staff constraints, and without understanding the current stock, trends, and future needs, it's difficult to create effective zoning policies. He also referenced the percentage of single-family homes in Evanston compared to nearby areas, stressing the value of preserving these homes to maintain the city's unique character.

Robert Keading, a resident of 1320 Main, argued that removing parking mandates and changing zoning rules to allow more diverse housing types would provide flexibility in development without eliminating single-family homes. He emphasized that mixed-use and varied housing types, like those already existing in some parts of Evanston, add character and diversity to the community. Mr. Keading advocated for a more walkable, climate-friendly, and affordable city, citing successful examples from other cities and the benefits they saw, such as reduced housing costs and increased racial diversity.

Isaac Hacker, a resident of 1108 Hinman, generally supported the proposed changes but expressed concerns about zoning Chicago Avenue as M3, particularly because of the contrast in height between M3 and R1, which could cast nearby homes in shadow for much of the day.

He also pointed out that M3 zoning would allow for hotels, which might conflict with affordable housing goals. He suggested M1 and M2 zoning would be more appropriate for the area.

Alice Eagley raised concerns about changing R1 and R2 districts to allow multi-unit housing, citing the example of Ann Arbor, Michigan, where similar changes led to the displacement of university employees and the transformation of neighborhoods into student-dominated areas with parking issues. She urged the commission to preserve some single-family areas near the university to maintain the character of Evanston.

Linda Damashek, a resident of the Third Ward, strongly opposed the proposed zoning changes, arguing that allowing four-unit buildings on single-family lots and developing high-rise buildings downtown would negatively impact the character of Evanston's neighborhoods. She also questioned whether increasing density would actually lead to more affordable housing, as developers may prioritize upscale projects instead. Drawing from her experience in affordable housing development, she emphasized that there are more realistic and effective ways to address the city's housing needs.

Peter Kelly opposed the proposed expansion of the D3 Zone and the removal of meaningful height restrictions, arguing that this would lead to an oversupply of studio and one-bedroom rentals, without addressing the shortage of owner-occupied or affordable housing. He expressed concerns from downtown residents about the increase in high-rise developments and advocated for preserving the human scale of the neighborhood. Kelly suggested focusing on adaptive reuse of existing buildings, limiting new high-rise development to other transit centers, and ensuring new high-rises include owner-occupied condos for aging residents. He also called for more restrictive reviews for projects that reduce public goods, referencing the RP Zone's role in preserving community benefits.

Bonnie Wilson, a member of the Joining Forces for Affordable Housing Committee and an Evanston real estate agent, supported the proposed zoning changes, particularly the elimination of the "three unrelated" rule. She shared an example of a client who was previously unable to pursue a co-op living arrangement due to the zoning code but is now excited about the possibility of home-sharing to reduce living expenses and increase affordable housing. Wilson urged the city to embrace shared housing as a solution to affordable housing and expressed hope that more people would attend city meetings to hear the public's input on Evanston's future.

Paul Breslin, a resident at 1635 Hinman, expressed skepticism about the proposed plan's focus on affordable housing. He criticized the way the plan has been politicized, referencing the mayor's statement about the immorality of delaying the plan. He then cited concerns from various community members, including Larry Gavin's article questioning the plan's ability to truly address affordable housing needs, particularly for families needing three-bedroom units, which are scarce in the high-rise proposals. He also referenced Parielle Davis's comment about the plan being a "mercenary agenda" disguised as a progressive initiative. Mr. Breslin pointed out concerns raised by Commissioner Jameika Mangum regarding potential gentrification in low-income areas and emphasized that market-driven developments wouldn't produce affordable housing. He also questioned the rush to push the plan through before the election and concluded by advocating for a more thorough examination of the housing issue, urging attendees to read Alf McConnell's detailed letter on affordable housing.

Joe Caprile, a 40-year resident of Evanston and an architect, proposed a more practical approach to the zoning code revision. He suggested amending the existing code instead of

completely rewriting it, striking out outdated provisions and adding necessary updates. Mr. Caprile emphasized that the process would be clearer for the community with a simplified and cohesive zoning document. He also highlighted the challenge of reading an existing code alongside a new one and recommended the inclusion of supporting graphics to improve understanding.

David Cook, a Seventh Ward resident for over 35 years, expressed respect for the work of the zoning code revision process but raised concerns about the proposed changes. He believes developers will maximize profits based on the code, without incentives for affordable housing. Cook, with an architectural background and a wife with an MBA in finance, analyzed 24 properties for sale in Evanston. After reviewing zoning districts, property prices, and development possibilities, he concluded that the proposed code would not create affordable housing and could even reduce the number of affordable units. He opposed the plan due to these findings, emphasizing the importance of preserving the existing diverse housing stock and avoiding gentrification.

Richard Ravnik, a 48-year resident of Evanston, voiced concerns about the proposed zoning changes. He highlighted the city's existing high density, which is on par with Chicago, and emphasized the importance of maintaining the quality of life that long-time residents appreciate. Ravnik critiqued what he sees as self-serving motivations behind the push for change, asserting that those who have lived in Evanston for a long time value the city's current character and do not want it altered based on speculative goals. He advocates for preserving Evanston's existing structure rather than making changes that might not work in the long term.

David Galloway, a long-time Evanston resident and retired architect, expressed his concerns about the comprehensive zoning plan. He represented Design Evanston, a nonprofit group of design professionals, and himself. He shared that Design Evanston would submit a final statement on the plan by the end of the week after discussing it in several meetings. He highlighted the importance of "missing middle housing," and pointed out that many cities are now working to incorporate this type of housing, which he believes is crucial in addressing today's housing crisis. However, he criticized the current plan for not considering the scale and character of neighborhoods when planning new developments. Additionally, he echoed Bonnie Wilson's support for shared housing as an affordable and community-building option. Galloway encouraged further investigation into ideas from other experts, particularly those related to the new zoning ordinance.

Maryann Horton, a long-time Evanston resident, raised concerns about the potential impact of the *Envision Evanston 2045* plan, particularly the proposed changes to single-family zoning. Horton pointed out that many residents have worked hard to purchase homes and are invested in protecting the character of their neighborhoods. The plan's allowance for increased density, could drastically alter the landscape of the community. She emphasized that this could change the quiet, green, and historically diverse nature of Evanston, potentially reducing setbacks, parking, and sunlight in residential areas. She questioned whether rushing such a significant proposal before the election was wise and suggested that it should be carefully reviewed by the new city council, with full community input. Ms. Horton also acknowledged the nationwide housing affordability crisis but cautioned that solutions should not come at the cost of altering Evanston's character. She argued that this issue deserves thoughtful discussion, not a rushed decision, and that affordability should not be addressed by compromising the essence of the community.

Michael McElwee, a resident at 1722 Main, expressed concerns about parking around the Robert Crown Center, noting it's manageable when there are no events, but fills up during events. He also questioned the zoning change from C1 to M2 near Robert Crown, wanting to understand what could be developed under C1 versus M2. Additionally, he raised an issue with buildings negotiating parking spaces at high fees, which often leads tenants to park on the street instead of using the building's parking, thus not effectively solving the parking problem.

Patrick O'Connor thanked the Commissioners for their time and attention, acknowledging the complexity of the zoning issues. He raised two main concerns: first, the lack of tools to compare the actual bulk density of proposed developments in each zoning district with what can currently be built, beyond just the text of the old and new zoning codes. He questioned how the Commissioners could effectively advise and review without these tools. Second, he asked about impact studies, specifically if any analyses had been conducted on the potential impacts of increased density on city infrastructure, such as the sewer system, power grid, streets, parking, quality of life, and the environment. He requested these studies if available.

John Horseman, a resident of 1111 Hinman, expressed his agreement with concerns raised by his neighbors and appreciated the slowing down of the timeline for the zoning changes. He shared a personal experience in early 2024 when his family had to pay for an expensive plumbing repair. The repair revealed issues with the plumbing both on his property and in the main system, which added to the costs. Mr. Horseman expressed concerns about the impact of increased density on the city's aging infrastructure, particularly in light of his experience. He thanked those involved in taking a more measured approach to the plan, ensuring that the infrastructure can handle potential upzoning without further burdening families.

Dr. Arthur Altman, a resident of 807 Davis for 17 years, expressed concerns about the proposed 31-story building at the corner of Chicago Avenue and Davis Street. He highlighted traffic issues, noting that traffic backs up when turning at the intersection, especially with the current signal pattern. He worried that adding a large building would worsen congestion with more cars exiting the development, compounded by pedestrian traffic. Dr. Altman also mentioned that while zoning changes are important, the appeal of Evanston lies in its transportation, stores, and facilities. He suggested attracting people with new types of facilities, similar to Robert Crown Center, instead of just more retail. He concluded by urging the commission to consider these factors in their planning.

Andrea Liss, a resident of the Third Ward and owner of a commercial property in the Fourth Ward, expressed concerns about the zoning changes in the Envision Evanston 2045 plan. She pointed out that the proposed increase in height limits on Sherman Avenue and the introduction of coffee shops and convenience stores on Sheridan Road and nearby streets seemed ill-suited for their neighborhoods. Liss worried that these changes, if applied to the areas she knew well, suggested a lack of local understanding in the plan's design. She urged the Land Use Commission to slow down the process, reconsider the current draft, and ensure a more thoughtful and measured approach that wouldn't undermine the character of Evanston.

Chad Fitzloff, a resident of the Ninth Ward for 11 years and an Evanston resident for 15 years, expressed concerns that deregulating housing wouldn't promote equity. He argued that free-market forces prioritize profit over equity and that the South and West ends of Evanston, which currently have semi-affordable single-family homes, are most vulnerable to the negative effects of this deregulation. Mr. Fitzloff suggested that if the goal is equity, the inclusionary housing ordinance should be revised to require a higher percentage of affordable units, as the

current 10% is too low, especially in areas that may see the development of three- and four-flats.

Leah Sherman, a senior at Evanston Township High School, spoke on behalf of eTown Sunrise, Evanston's branch of the National Youth Sunrise Movement. She emphasized the importance of gathering youth input, noting that it is her generation that will be living with the outcomes of the Envisioning Evanston 2045 plan. She highlighted that affordable housing crises primarily affect those still entering the housing market, not those who already own homes. Leah expressed support for the revision of R1 zoning to increase housing supply and the creation of mixed-use zones that support small businesses and walkable communities. She disagreed with the idea that these changes would harm Evanston's character, arguing that as the community grows, so too will the city's character. She then urged the Commission to seek out and consider youth input in the final stages before the plan is voted on.

Ron Ruby, a resident of 2010 Maple Avenue, spoke about several concerns. He emphasized that affordable housing can only be achieved by incentivizing developers, as it is a profit-driven industry. Ruby also expressed concerns about the proposed zoning changes around the corner of Maple and Foster. Specifically, he was worried about the large empty lot on the southeast corner, which Northwestern owns, and noted that the proposed zoning (likely U2) could potentially allow for a stadium to be built there, which surprised him. He also questioned the intended use for that property. Mr. Ruby raised concerns about a potential M1 zoning on the northwest corner, where he lives nearby, and found it odd that the zoning was proposed to extend north of Foster Avenue rather than south of it. Additionally, he mentioned the current townhomes on the northeast corner, which may be rezoned to M1, and noted that this seemed inconsistent.

Anne Head, a resident of the 500 block of Sheridan Road, expressed concern about upzoning R1 to allow three or four-unit buildings, fearing it would lead to developers demolishing single-family homes to build multi-unit structures. She questioned the effectiveness of proposed density increases, citing challenges with filling unoccupied spaces downtown and concerns about strained infrastructure, including police and city services. Ms. Head asked whether the proposal was driven by the city or a consultant and criticized the rushed timeline for Envision Evanston 2045, urging a more thoughtful approach.

John Fisher, a resident of 1566 Dewey Avenue, raised concerns about the rezoning of his area from R3 to R2, fearing it could impact property taxes, making it harder for residents to afford to live in Evanston. He also expressed support for affordable housing but warned that pushing the plan through too quickly could lead to developers building large structures that increase tax liabilities without sufficiently improving infrastructure. Mr. Fisher, who has two children, spoke on behalf of many neighbors who share similar worries.

Jim Slingo, a real estate manager with experience in Evanston, shared his concerns and proposed a compromise for the city's zoning changes. He emphasized the need to avoid excessive high-rises, particularly in areas like Main Street and South Boulevard, to preserve single-family homes and maintain the character of downtown. His proposal suggests allowing two-unit townhomes or flats with an additional unit in a coach house, offering affordable housing incentives, maintaining a height limit of 25-28 feet, ensuring parking spaces, and using sustainable materials. He advocates for affordable housing to be defined as accessible for individuals making 35% of the median income.

Sheila Sullivan, a resident of the 700 block of Hinman, expressed concern about the rapid pace of the zoning changes without critical baseline information, such as impact studies. She emphasized that the zoning code seems further along than the comprehensive plan, which could be used to justify the changes. Ms. Sullivan also raised issues with potential development of municipal surface lots, highlighting the importance of considering the parking needs in the area, as these lots are full at night despite being underutilized during the day. She requested that the process slow down to address these concerns thoroughly.

Mary Rosinski shared concerns about the origins of the proposed zoning changes in Evanston, which stemmed from a diagnostic zoning report commissioned by Connections for the Homeless in 2021. She expressed that the resulting recommendations seemed to be driving the zoning reforms, which she feels overlook the significance of Evanston's neighborhoods. She also mentioned that large institutions, like Northwestern, should respect the surrounding communities. She then critiqued the proposal to eliminate overlay districts like the Westside Plan, Downtown Plan, and Central Street Plan which many residents had worked on. Rosinski emphasized the need for a more thorough understanding of housing stock, future needs, and affordable housing before making sweeping changes. She recommended creating a working committee with local experts and questioned the hiring of consultants for affordable housing projects, especially on land banked properties like Emerson and Jackson. Lastly, she argued that there was no need to rush the process, as there are still key questions to address regarding affordable housing and the consultants' selection.

Meg Welsh, who lives at 1325 Greenleaf in the Fourth Ward, suggested that the council request a housing study be completed before finalizing the comprehensive plan. She referenced a housing plan from Highland Park that surveyed employers to gather data on housing demand and the availability of affordable housing. The speaker emphasized the importance of understanding the current housing stock and the need for detailed, granular data to shape the vision for affordable housing in Evanston. She also inquired about the current data sources, as they had heard the staff was no longer working with HDR, and expressed confusion about who was driving the data collection process. Ms. Welsh concluded by stating that market forces alone wouldn't provide affordable housing and that public investment would be necessary, offering to send an article to support this point.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Lindwall stressed the need for legal clarification on whether the city can later reverse increased density allowances without violating property rights. She also called for a legal review of the proposed standards for zoning changes, special uses, and major variations to ensure compliance with Illinois law and prevent legal challenges. Additionally, she requested maps showing lots over 6,500 square feet and those under 4,500 square feet in R1-R4 districts to better understand how proposed zoning changes align with existing lot sizes. She noted that many assume northwest Evanston consists mostly of large lots, but a closer look at tax maps reveals many smaller 35-foot-wide lots.

Commissioner Halik agreed and emphasized the need for a 3D model to visualize existing conditions and proposed zoning changes. He argued that numbers alone are insufficient for understanding the impact and that a visual representation would help both the commission and the community grasp the implications of the new zoning. Commissioner Mirintchev mentioned he was encouraged with the first conversations with the consultant about the use of ArcGIS but does not see that in what has been presented. It would be useful to include.

Commissioner Lindwall then made a suggestion for additional information on residential parking demand for various types of residential units. Understanding the number of units in various buildings and the amount of vehicles registered at those addresses. This would help provide information on transit oriented development areas as well. Commissioner Halik expressed that he thinks if more of the new buildings had 2 and 3-bedroom units, projected parking demand would be different.

Commissioner Mabadi addressed two main concerns: the viability of larger unit types and the effectiveness of proposed zoning changes in achieving affordable housing. He first explained why developers tend to avoid two- and three-bedroom units, noting that rental rates per square foot are lower than for studios and one-bedroom units. He pointed out that constraints like affordability requirements, parking mandates, and setback rules influence development choices. Despite discussions about an oversupply of one-bedroom and studio units, developers are still securing financing and filling buildings, suggesting the market has not yet reached saturation.

Second, he raised concerns about the proposed changes to R1 through R4 zoning, questioning whether they would truly address affordability. He argued that simply increasing supply in a land-limited market like Evanston would not significantly lower prices, unlike in areas with ample land for development. He questioned the purpose of the zoning changes, noting that removing land-per-unit requirements and allowing four units on a 6,200-square-foot lot could lead to narrower, taller buildings with unconventional designs rather than family-friendly housing.

Commissioner Mabadi suggested that the city first define its affordable housing goals before making sweeping zoning changes. He proposed alternatives such as modifying the existing code, expanding adaptive reuse options, and allowing additional accessory dwelling units. While acknowledging that these discussions may have taken place before he joined the commission, he emphasized the need for clarity on how zoning changes align with affordability goals.

Commissioner Mirintchev emphasized the need for data and modeling to understand the impact of proposed zoning changes, particularly regarding lot sizes and density. He suggested visualizing different housing types, such as duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, to assess their effects on density and neighborhood character. Reviewing the new zoning ordinance, he found it difficult to compare with the existing code and suggested including strikeout versions for clarity. He raised concerns about missing or unclear definitions, particularly regarding building height, attic spaces, basements, and bulk regulations. He also noted that parameters like minimum lot area per dwelling unit should be retained to avoid excessive flexibility. Additionally, he pointed out inconsistencies in definitions, such as ground floor area and front facades, which could create future challenges. While he acknowledged the effort to simplify the ordinance, he stressed the need for precise language to prevent unnecessary variances. Lastly, he praised the inclusion of an operational plan and a sustainability plan as valuable additions to the zoning code.

Commissioner Arevalo mentioned that she asked the same question regarding comparing the current and proposed new code. She suggested creating a 2-D model of streets using existing aerial photos and overlay what the new code would allow on that street.

Chair Rodgers raised concerns about the zoning code revision, emphasizing the need for an additional residential district to better transition between R1-R3 and the broad R4, which currently acts as a catchall. He criticized the interactive zoning map for lacking clear definitions, making it difficult for residents to compare zoning changes. He also highlighted issues with

zoning standards, noting that requiring special uses to “expand the tax base” ignores non-profits and that variation standards should allow for minor changes, like sunroom additions, without needing broad public benefit justification. Additionally, he questioned the “limited use” category, arguing that requiring traffic demand management plans for all cases—including micro-homes—was excessive and expressing concern over granting too much discretion to the city manager. Rodgers urged clearer zoning comparisons, improved public accessibility, and more practical administrative reviews.

The commission discussed the review process for sustainability plans, questioning whether they should be evaluated administratively or require further oversight. Concerns were raised about the approval process, potential appeals, and ensuring zoning standards are clearly defined. The discussion then shifted to zoning boundaries, particularly whether district lines should be drawn at alleys or streets to better transition between residential and commercial areas. Commissioners debated how zoning changes could impact neighborhoods, emphasizing the need for a more detailed and localized approach rather than broad, one-size-fits-all classifications.

Public input was encouraged, particularly in refining zoning maps and identifying acceptable levels of change. It was noted that some residents opposed large-scale development near single-family homes but were open to moderate increases in density. The commission recognized that different neighborhoods have unique needs and that zoning adjustments should reflect that diversity.

Staff emphasized the importance of continued community engagement and acknowledged that feedback would help refine the zoning proposals. The discussion concluded with the decision to close the public hearing without making a final recommendation, with further work to be done on refining zoning categories and addressing public concerns.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Approval of 2025 Meeting Calendar

Chair Rodgers confirmed that staff made sure there were no conflicts with other major holidays. Commissioner Lindwall asked for clarification on a few dates, suggesting that the May 22nd date listed be removed.

Commissioner Lindwall made a motion to approve the calendar with the requested omission of May 22nd. Commissioner Arevalo seconded. A voice vote was taken and the calendar was approved 6-0.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Rodgers alerted the Commission and members of the public that he will be resigning from the Commission at the conclusion of the January 29th meeting so he is able to run for office with no conflicts.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Peter Kelly asked about risks that Evanston has as we look towards the future and asked if there are any considerations for building materials and building safety. It was clarified that the building code would be the best place to address those concerns.

Maryann Horton asked who the consultant behind the project is and if the contract is still in effect. Ms. Williams responded that the consultant is HDR Inc. and that the contract with that entity has not been terminated.

David Galloway - expressed that zoning should be from a form based perspective. 3-D presentation of the form would enable people to readily understand what is allowed. People have been responding to what is proposed based on what is written without a full picture of what the regulations would allow. 3-D representations would reduce a lot of anxiety as opposed to trying to figure out what different phrase mean

Paul Breslin inquired if the contract with HDR would be terminated and additional details on that. Chair Rodgers clarified that the final decision on that action rests with City Council.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Lindwall moved to adjourn
Commissioner Arevalo seconded

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

The next Evanston Land Use Commission meeting will be held **on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at 6:00 pm**, in the James C. Lytle Council Chambers in the Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Justin Bock, Administrative lead

Reviewed by
Meagan Jones, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner