



**MEETING MINUTES**

**PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

7:00 P.M. Council Chambers Room 2800

Members Present: Carl Klein, Thomas Ahleman, Amanda Ziehm, Sarah M. Dreler, Stuart Cohen, Lesa Rizzolo, John Jacobs, Beth Bodan, Matthew Johnson, Charles Smith

Members Absent: Joshua Bowes-Carlson,

Staff Present: Cade W. Sterling

Presiding Member: Sarah M. Dreler, Chair

Minutes Taken by: Cade W. Sterling

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**CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Members of the public are afforded three minutes per person to provide testimony related to items listed under discussion, or to otherwise address the Commission generally. Members of the public wishing to provide testimony on new or unfinished business shall be given the opportunity to do so during those agenda items in a manner and under time limits determined by the Chair.

- Residents Jeff Wooten, Pat Mulhern, Michael Davis, and Steve Test of the 1000, 1100, and 1200 blocks of Hinman Avenue spoke in opposition to the draft zoning changes for the portion of Chicago Avenue between Dempster Street and Lee Street. Specifically, residents noted the proposal to allow up to 100' buildings as-of-right with a 5' rear-yard setback adjacent to single-family residences in the Lakeshore Historic District. Residents expressed concern that this would result in a loss of light and air, devalue property, and negatively impact the integrity of the historic district. Additionally, residents noted the Preserve 2040 Plan which specifically identifies this area as requiring additional sensitivity in approach due to its redevelopment potential along a major corridor adjacent to the historic district. Residents requested the Commission review the

proposal and make a recommendation that the proposed zoning is incompatible.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **1314 Judson Avenue - Lakeshore Historic District - 24PRES-0170**

Jeanie Petrick, architect and applicant on behalf of the property owner, submit for a Certificate of Appropriateness to raise the ceiling height and alter the roof form of an existing two-story addition to the structures south elevation, alter the homes pattern of fenestration including replacement windows in existing and new openings, and truncating the existing volume and roof of a rear elevation screened porch. **Continued from December 10, 2024.**

**Applicable Standards:** Alteration [1-10]; and Construction [1-8; 10-13; and 15].

- Jeanie Petrick presented an overview of the changes made to the plan since the previous submission in December. Specifically, the proposed roof form for the previous tower had been reduced in height and better integrated into the existing roof form, changes were made to the pattern of fenestration on the side and rear elevations to better mimic existing conditions, and the proposed screen porch had been shifted further south to allow for a full gable roof form rather than a clipped gable as previously proposed.
- Commissioners acknowledged the significant improvement to the plans and thanked the applicant for taking their comments and suggestions seriously and turning around the new composition that had better proportions, was more cohesive, and was simplified.
- The Commission agreed that the new composition met the standards.
- A motion to approve as presented was made by Commissioner Klein and seconded by Commissioner Ziehm. The motion carried on a vote of 10-0.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Election of 2025 Officers**

- Mr. Sterling distributed ballots to each Commissioner
- Commissioner Cohen asked to remove himself for consideration as Secretary.
- The Commission voted 7-3 to elect Commissioner Klein as Chair, 10-0 for Commissioner Ahleman as Vice-Chair, and 10-0 for Commissioner Ziehm as secretary.

## **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

### **Minutes of December 12, 2024**

- The minutes were approved without revision.

## **DISCUSSION (NO VOTE WILL BE TAKEN)**

### **Envision Evanston 2045 - Draft Zoning Code**

Pursuant to City Code Sections 2-8-3 (G) 15, 20, and 24 the Commission will review the draft City-initiated amendments to the Zoning Ordinance -- providing written testimony and recommendations on their appropriateness for the protection and continued use of existing landmarks and properties, structures, sites, or objects within historic districts, as well as their potential affect on other historically, culturally, architecturally, or archaeologically significant areas, sites, structures, and objects throughout the City.

- Mr. Sterling provided brief background on the discussion including
  - Whether the following areas represent historically, culturally, or architecturally significant areas within the City that although not be registered as historic districts otherwise have a special interest or value to the City and its citizens.
  - whether the proposed zoning for these areas encourages their preservation, continued utilization, and rehabilitation; and,
  - If not, what would the Commission recommend as an alternative.
  
- **Chicago Avenue between Dempster and Lee Street.**
  - General consensus was that the proposed M3 designation here is not appropriate particularly on the east side of Chicago Avenue where lots abut low-density single-family homes within the Lakeshore Historic District. Commissioners recommended no more than four stories in this location and that this would allow for appropriate building types that would be compatible with surrounding character and built forms.
  - Commissioners also recommended that any reduction in bulk that may occur due to FAR restrictions should occur at the rear volume of these buildings and/or increase the rear-yard setback from 5' to 15'.
  - Commissioners also discussed the west side of Chicago Avenue feeling that 6-7 stories was more appropriate as-of-right along the entirety of the corridor, with higher-density being appropriate as it approaches existing higher-density developments north and south of Main.
  - The general agreement was that the entire corridor should not be treated as a single zoning district, that the east and west sides should be treated differently, and that the built form along the corridor should correspond to changes in context and design vocabularies east and west of it.

- **Main Street between Custer and Maple.**

- Consensus was that the proposed zoning, particularly the proposed increase in FAR, was not compatible with the existing built form of this business district, noting the majority of its character is 2-3 stories. This is another location where allowing no more than a four-story building as-of-right was seen as compatible for these locations.
- Due to the significance of the storefronts and built fabric in this location, the rhythm of fenestration and entrances, alignment of horizontal articulation by way of aligned eaves, cornice lines, belt and string courses etc, it was suggested that this location have more prescriptive design related requirements for as-of-right developments that enable new interventions that respect the character and articulation of existing forms.
- Commissioners noted that the proposed zoning significantly increased development potential in this area and incentivizes demolition without a way to ensure new built fabric is of high quality. It creates significant potential to negatively impact the traditional and human-scaled nature of these locations that are tied to Evanston's identity and also offer lower-rent structures and more easily adaptable retail spaces that foster legacy and small business activity.
- Commissioners also discussed the potential for required setbacks and transitional height planes above the full second-story in this location. The proposed FAR essentially allows a six story box to be constructed with little articulation or reduction in mass. This would not only be incompatible with the existing fabric along Main Street but also surrounding low-density residential neighborhoods to which the district is visually related.

- **Dempster Street between Elmwood and the alley west of Hinman.**

- The Commission has the same concerns with the proposed zoning along Dempster Street as they did with the Main Street narrative above.
- There was additional concern with the adjacent M3 zoning designation just south of Dempster adjacent to the landmark at the southwest corner of Chicago and Dempster, as well as the portion of M3 just east of Sherman running south noting that this is allowing up to 100' buildings as-of-right adjacent to lower-density two-part commercial buildings and lower-density residential to the west side of

Sherman, a handful of which are landmarks.

- The proposed zoning along Chicago Avenue in this area would incentivize a complete rearrangement of space and character for the intersection of Chicago and Dempster, and the Commission did not agree that this was desirable or necessary.

- **Downtown Davis Street between the alley west of Hinman and Ridge.**

- It was noted that the portions of east and west Davis Street should be treated differently as they contain very different built forms and character currently. The portion of the downtown along Davis west of the Metra Tracks contains a significant concentration of long-standing and legacy businesses. It was noted that there is obviously some economic equilibrium that exists in this location where the current built fabric, rent structures, tax structure etc, allows these businesses to thrive. If locations like this are already contributing the the character of the downtown in a significant way, why incentivize dramatically changing that?
- West of the tracks on Davis, the consensus of the Commission was that the existing D2 zoning should be maintained or have a modest increase in the existing FAR that is permitted to achieve no more than a three-story building as-of-right in this location.
- It was noted that this portion of Davis acts more as a neighborhood business district and not as much part of the downtown, being immediately adjacent to residential areas. In many ways, this portion of the downtown (west Davis) could follow the same recommendations made for Main and Dempster, with transitional height planes, design guidelines, and other ways to create more predictive outcomes that have compatible building articulation.
- The portion of Davis Street east of the Metra tracks didn't complete consensus before continuing the discussion for the next meeting. However, it was stated that the current proposal, particularly the increase in FAR for this location was not appropriate and that the proposed 65' height, with a lower FAR could result in built forms that respect the existing scale of buildings at the street level while stepping back behind that existing streetwall. It was another area where guiding more prescriptive design outcomes due to the significance of the architecture currently in these locations was seen as desirable.

The Commission asked to pick up the remaining areas at their February meeting to continue reviewing portions of the downtown, Central Street, and the Florence/Greenleaf area.

### **2025 Annual Work Plan**

In preparation for adoption of a 2025 annual work plan to advance initiatives within the City's preservation plan, *Preserve 2040*, the Commission shall discuss priorities and interests for the upcoming calendar year.

- Commissioners expressed an interest in continuing survey and documentation efforts as well as supplementing and reviewing the ongoing study list of eligible properties.
- Commissioners asked that as part of this survey work, they focus attention on lesser identified and acknowledged resources associated with Evanston's broader history and identity.
- Commissioners discussed that as part of reviewing the study list of eligible resources, they could select a few resources and engage with property owners to discuss landmark nominations.
- Commissioners asked to continue work on the deconstruction ordinance, as well as pick up the advisory subcommittee or consortium idea from the 2024 work plan.
- Finally, Commissioners expressed a desire to create training materials and engage with Councilmembers to conduct one-on-one trainings and orientations for the preservation program and ordinance. This was seen as especially important considering the upcoming election and potential for new council members.

The meeting adjourned at 10:07pm.