



## **“CBD-Norhtown-Parking Task Force”**

Fifteenth Meeting: Monday, March 3, 2008 @ 7:30 p.m.

**Members in Attendance:** Kevin Augustyn, Beth Barrow, Chris Callahan, Julie Crnovich, Jean Follett, Dave Friedman, Jeanie Janes, Jeff Keller, Eric Pitcher, and Karl Weber

**Staff in Attendance:** Timothy Scott, AICP, Community Development Strategist

**Others in Attendance:** Bob Saigh, Resident and Chris Elder, Resident

### Opening Remarks

Chairman Friedman opened the meeting at 7:34 p.m. He informed the group that the evening’s meeting would cover approval of minutes, a re-cap of the presentation made to the Downtown Land Planning Task Force, consideration of the draft land use plan, and a review of the initial draft of the group’s final report.

### Approval of Minutes

Chairman Friedman asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting of February 4, 2008. Mr. Pitcher made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Keller seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. In addition, Chairman Friedman passed out hard copies of the minutes from the February 18, 2008 meeting, commented that he had also sent them via e-mail earlier in the day, and requested that members review in advance of the next meeting so that they could be adopted.

### Downtown Land Planning Task Force

Chairman Friedman reported that he attended the February 28, 2008 meeting of the Downtown Land Planning Task Force to share with their members the work-to-date of the CBD-Norhtown-Parking Task Force. He noted that CBD-Norhtown-Parking Task Force members Jeanie Janes and Karl Weber were in attendance since they serve on both groups and that Jeff Keller of the CBD-Norhtown-Parking Task Force was present as well. Chairman Friedman stated that he reviewed the group’s draft land use plan matrix and main recommendations. He commented that

feedback was positive for both the overall approach and for specific items and that no major issues were raised that had not been already. Mr. Weber agreed with Chairman Friedman's assessment of the receptiveness of the Downtown Land Planning Task Force.

### Consideration of Draft Land Use Plan

Chairman Friedman passed out the newest version of the land use alternatives matrix, stated that he had updated it per the direction received at the last meeting, and noted that he had added further clarification with the table's key. He asked if members had any additional edits, and it was suggested that redundant text be removed from one of the cells. With that edit, Trustee Follett made a motion to adopt the land use matrix. Kevin Augustyn seconded, and the motion was approved by a vote of 7 (Augustyn, Callahan, Follett, Friedman, Janes, Keller, and Pitcher) to 3 (Barrow, Crnovich, and Weber).

### Review of Draft Final Report

Chairman Friedman passed out copies of the draft final report so that the group could work through its content. He read aloud the goal of the Task Force and the key characteristics (i.e., land use, design, and parking) identified to achieve its goal. Discussion centered on the following:

#### *Parking*

Mr. Weber remarked that it appeared that parking-related objectives had been achieved. Several members (Janes, Keller, Pitcher) commented that while initial steps have appeared to produce desirable improvements, they underscored the charge of the Task Force as not only implementing changes for present-day needs but also planning for potentially more vibrant times within the 20-year horizon.

#### *Cultural Anchor*

Chairman Friedman opened the discussion by referencing the adopted use matrix. He reiterated that the group's preferred location of a cultural attraction is the commuter lot and/or surrounding block, noted that the adaptive re-use of the Post Office as a possible option, and mentioned that the greater Grant Square and Hinsdale Middle School areas were acceptable locations for such uses.

Mr. Weber expressed that Hinsdale is, and should remain, a quiet, serene, tranquil place to raise children, and with that conviction, he would not want to see night life change the Village's character. He added that the CBD should primarily serve the needs of the community's residents and that those essential stores could be supplemented by small specialty shops that could bring some people into town.

Mr. Pitcher agreed that Hinsdale should remain a quiet place but pointed out that the size of the Village and the Task Force's study area would naturally constrain development and evening attractions. Mr. Augustyn added to that thought by stating that the lack of a thoroughfare through downtown would prevent excess development and the hustle and bustle associated with more highly-visible places. He commented further that a cultural anchor would likely enliven existing retail stores and restaurants and that such a destination could serve to attract additional complementary ones.

Mr. Keller remarked that a cultural arts anchor would contribute to residential living in the Village in a meaningful way, and thus, be reflective of Hinsdale's family-oriented way of life. He added that a central location would reinforce the Village's walk-ability and that it could potentially encourage an increase in local shopping, noting his family's frequenting of Kramer Foods since his children began music lessons at a school at 40 S. Clay St. Mr. Augustyn echoed those thoughts and added that a diverse collection of appropriate uses would improve the competitiveness of downtown Hinsdale.

Ms. Barrow expressed her concern that such a facility could detract from The Community House since there could be duplicative offerings and competition for financial resources. As a resident on the north side of the tracks living just three blocks from the commuter lot block, she questioned what impact such a multi-use facility would have on the general area and stated that she would prefer single-use.

Ms. Crnovich shared that the topic of a cultural anchor, while recently raised, now appears to be the driver for a mixed-use development and wondered how construction, and more importantly, its maintenance and operation, could be financed. She cited a statistic that reveals that maintaining one space in a parking structure reportedly costs more than \$500 per year.

Mr. Weber stated that a mixed-use facility might exacerbate the parking problem that the recently-implemented changes had been solving. Mr. Keller recalled that earlier discussions of a new development of this sort would be designed to accommodate new uses and provide an overall increase in the supply of parking spaces. Mr. Augustyn added that with a mixed-use facility, the demand for parking spaces would be spread out throughout the day rather than concentrated at peak times with predominantly commuters.

Chairman Friedman commented that while the idea would be to create with little to no taxpayer cost, the Task Force is focusing its discussion on land use, adding that details regarding financing would be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees and that any appropriate appointed members such as those serving on the Finance Commission.

Mr. Saigh addressed the Task Force. He noted his long-time service to the Hinsdale Historical Society and informed the members that the million-dollar restoration of

108 year-old Immanuel Hall at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Grant Street was nearing completion. Mr. Saigh reported that the first floor of the facility is for public use with a seating capacity of approximately 90-95 and that the lower level will be a resource center. Members were quite interested in the project, its historic importance, and its ability to complement the community. However, some felt that while Immanuel Hall is an asset, it may serve a different purpose relative to the arts center concept discussed in terms of accommodating a wide-range of uses, user groups, and audience sizes.

### *Housing*

With respect to housing in and around the downtown area, discussion occurred as to whether additional residential options should be open to all or entirely restricted to empty nesters. The general feeling of the group was that while such housing may be targeted to empty nesters or even restricted in a given development, the group agreed that its recommendation should be that all of the areas be comprised of exclusively age-restricted housing.

Mr. Keller asked if similar communities' establish specific provisions on housing. Mr. Scott replied that an affluent Chicago area community that has taken a leadership position is the City of Highland Park, which is approximately twice the population of Hinsdale. He relayed that the City established the first community land trust in Illinois to administer a program for affordable housing with the intention of meeting the housing demand of middle-income folks such as school teachers and municipal employees.

Mr. Scott further explained that the community land trust was funded with \$1 million in seed money and that ongoing funding is derived from a teardown tax (originally \$10,000 per demolished home). He added that the City also developed its own senior living facility. Mr. Scott summarized by saying that such initiatives may be characterized as philosophical decisions based on community values that were brought to fruition by strong local political officials. Ms. Barrow relayed to the group that at one time housing had been supplied in the downtown to teachers at the local school and commented further that the time to maintain an affordable supply of middle-class housing was twenty years ago when the teardown phenomenon began.

### *Buffers*

Following up on his comment from the last meeting of the Task Force, Mr. Saigh reiterated that careful consideration should be given to the areas described as buffers. He underscored the importance of complementary uses that would be highly-sensitive to existing neighbors and suggested that particular attention be paid to factors such as noise, light, and odor.

Next Meeting

Chairman Friedman announced that the next meeting of the Central Business District-Northtown-Parking Task Force would be held on Monday, March 17, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the Old Board Room located on the second floor of the Hinsdale Memorial Building, 19 East Chicago Avenue.

Mr. Pitcher made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Augustyn seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Timothy Scott, AICP