

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF
THE CONCEPTUAL PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

OF THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS PLAN COMMISSION

A VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM WAS HELD ON:

November 18, 2020

Project Title: Arlington 425 PUD Amendment
Project Address: Northern Portion of Block 425

Petitioner: Michael D. Firsel
Address: 2801 Lakeside Drive-Suite 207
Bannockburn, IL 60015

Requested Action:

1. An amendment to Planned Unit Development (PUD) Ordinance 19-019, to allow modifications to the previously approved development plan

Variations Required:

- None identified at this time

Attendees: Mike Firsel, Petitioner
Bruce Green, Plan Commissioner
Lynn Jensen, Plan Commissioner
John Sigalos, Plan Commissioner
Jay Cherwin, Plan Commissioner
Sam Hubbard, Development Planner

Project Summary:

The subject property is the “Arlington 425” development site, located on the west side of Downtown Arlington Heights. This property was approved as a PUD in 2019 to allow 361 dwelling units dispersed amongst three proposed buildings on the site. This development was to include ground floor mixed uses in two of the buildings, totaling up to approximately 36,000 square feet of ground floor retail space and approximately 7,500 square feet of office space. The largest building onsite was to include 5-6 floors of parking with 7 stories of apartments above (total of 13 floors). Formal approval of this development was granted by the Village Board on June 3, 2019, and on August 17 of 2020, the Village Board granted an extension of those approvals through June 3, 2021 (for the Preliminary Plat of Subdivision), and June 3, 2022 for the PUD.

The petitioner is proposing certain modifications to the approved PUD, which would reduce the density of the project and decrease the total number of units from 361 units to 322 units. The thirteen-story garage/apartment tower would be reduced to 4 stories of parking only, with potential for a one-story addition for future additional parking spaces.

Meeting Discussion:

Mr. Firsel introduced himself, stating that changes are being sought to the previously approved 2019 plans following a thorough analysis into construction costs and other development factors. New plans have been developed in conjunction with financial partners. The major change from previously approved plans is the removal of the tower over the parking garage. In order to accommodate for the loss of units from the tower, the Campbell Building and Chestnut Building would be 1 story taller than previously approved. The petitioner believes these heights are comparable with existing similar multifamily buildings in the area, and with the Downtown Master Plan for Block 425. Research has also indicated reduced retail demand. As a result, the revised plan includes residential uses on the second floor of the Campbell building. Commercial uses will remain on the first floor, with the area at Campbell and Highland used as a restaurant, and the remainder used as amenity space if a commercial user cannot be found. The center area of the site would have park-like features. The garage would be 4-5 levels depending upon the number of units and whether the Chestnut Building would be owner or renter occupied. The

developer wishes to retain the existing porte-cochere feature as it is a major element of the development. The project would be in two phases – the first being the Campbell Building and Highland Garage, and the second being the Chestnut Building. In the Chestnut Building, if owner occupied 68 units would be incorporated, and if renter occupied 88 units would be incorporated. This would be determined in the future based on market conditions. Additional parking for additional units would be accommodated on the fifth floor of the parking garage.

Mr. Hubbard stated the original PUD was approved in 2019. This PUD included 3 buildings, 36,000 square-feet of ground floor and second floor commercial space, and 7,500 square-feet of office space. The Highland Building would've been 13 stories tall. The plan received a 1-year approval extension in summer of 2020. The petitioner is seeking an amendment to the approved plan, which would include a reduction of units from 361 to 322 units. The Highland tower would be eliminated, the Campbell building would increase in height from 9 to 10 stories, and the Chestnut building would increase in height from 4 to 5 stories. These modifications require an amendment to the PUD. There may be some modifications to the approved subdivision documents as well. Detailed plans, information on the breakdown of 1 and 2 bedroom units, information on parking space allocation and management, and finalized floor plans would be required as part of the Plan Commission review process. With respect to the increased building heights, Staff believes the heights are generally consistent with those outlined in the Downtown Master Plan. The petitioner is asked to hold a virtual neighborhood meeting in advance to present the project to the neighborhood and obtain their feedback. There will be changes to the affordable housing program, however this is under the purview of the Housing Commission and ultimately the Village Board. Staff believes this is an opportunity to review the inclusion of the porte-cochere feature, as Staff was not fully sold on the need for the feature. Given reduced traffic demand due to the proposed downscaling of the project, Staff is requesting the petitioner reevaluate the inclusion of the porte-cochere, however it seems that the petitioner strongly wants to retain this feature. There may be a way to reduce the width of the porte-cochere if it is still included. A Design Commission application will be required, and the Fire and Building Departments will evaluate the removal of the fire lane between the two buildings. Preliminary internal discussions indicated removal of the fire lane would not impact the ability to provide emergency access. Staff still wants to review Campbell building floor plans to understand the extent and location of amenity space and commercial space. Details should be provided on whether or not the garage would be connected to the Village garage, Staff may or may not be supportive of a connection, and any connection would require evaluation. Staff is generally supportive of the application and continued development of this project.

Commissioner Sigalos asked if the parking garage structure would be designed for future vertical expansion if market conditions change.

Mr. Firsel stated that it would be designed only as a parking garage. Costs to build for major vertical expansion would be astronomical. The garage would not be connected to the Village garage.

Commissioner Sigalos asked if it was yet to be determined if the units would be condos or rentals.

Mr. Firsel stated that the Campbell building would be fully rental units, however the Chestnut building may be either condo or rental units. It is going to be requested that all 16 affordable units would be in the Campbell Building.

Commissioner Jensen stated the revised layout seems less convenient, and people will have to walk outside to access the garage. He asked if any underground connection has been contemplated.

Mr. Firsel stated that the previously proposed connection to the garage has not changed, people will not have to walk outside.

Commissioner Jensen said there was some confusing language in the project description in regard to affordable housing. He recommended clarifying the description prior to an appearance before the Housing Commission and Village Board.

Mr. Firsel clarified that he'd like the flexibility to include all affordable units in the Campbell building.

Commissioner Jensen stated that made sense. He stated he agreed with the petitioner's statement in the summary that

the study on commercial space demand was conducted prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, and believes that Staff and the Village Board pushes too hard to include commercial space in these types of projects. He encourages Staff to reevaluate the extent of commercial space required in these developments. He likes the project and hopes to see it move forward.

Commissioner Cherwin stated he agrees with **Commissioner Jensen's** comments regarding the inclusion of commercial space. He does not like vacant storefronts. He has no objections to the changes, in his opinion a lot of the resistance to the previous proposal was the number of units and corresponding traffic, and the height of the tower. The increased height of the two remaining buildings shouldn't be an issue. He asked if second floor units in the Campbell building would have balconies, and if the possibility of topping off the garage with greenspace was considered.

Mr. Firsel stated that second floor wouldn't be conducive to balconies on the Campbell side, but he will evaluate balconies in other areas. With respect to a green roof on the garage, it is possible. If a second commercial user for the first floor of the Campbell building is found, some amenities may be located on top of the garage rather than in that first floor space. There will also be amenity space on top of the Campbell building. He wants to have a neighborhood meeting as he thinks it will appease any fears. He will sit down with Village Staff to discuss parking, impacts, and requirements. A revised traffic study will be prepared based on the revised unit count.

Commissioner Green asked if the inclusion of public parking in the garage was considered, even if not free. He's not sure if it presents a security issue.

Mr. Firsel said it's a financial issue, not a security issue. Provision of parking above code results in costs higher than the developer can afford.

Commissioner Green said it didn't have to be free, people could pay a toll. He was just raising it as a possibility.

Mr. Firsel said anything's a possibility if you can afford it. He's looked into the financial impact of providing additional parking and determined it was not feasible.

Commissioner Green stated that with the elimination of the 13-story tower the project would be an easier sell to the neighborhood. The additional floor in the Chestnut building is understandable and a nice addition, as the building appeared dwarfed before. He thinks the proposal is a great project.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bruce Adriani wanted to answer **Commissioner Cherwin's** questions regarding balconies on the second floor of the Campbell building. As of right now, it is planned to incorporate balconies in line with balconies on the floors above.

Keith Moens commented that he hoped the petitioner would keep all of the previously approved 18 affordable units within the development, as well maintain the originally approved fee-in-lieu of payment for additional affordable units not included onsite. He asked about the petitioner's statement regarding the placement of all required onsite affordable units within the Campbell building.

Mr. Firsel responded that the project would be required to appear before the Housing Commission and he would address the comment at that time.

Keith Moens stated that he would've liked a more substantial response but that he can wait.

RECOMMENDATION

The Conceptual Plan Review Committee encouraged the petitioner to proceed forward with their application while taking the comments from the Conceptual Plan Review Committee into consideration.

Bruce Green, Chair
CONCEPTUAL PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

Jake Schmidt, Recorder