

**REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF
THE CONCEPTUAL PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
OF THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS PLAN COMMISSION**

HELD AT VILLAGE HALL ON:

January 24, 2018

Project Title: Sigwalt Street Apartments
Address: 37-45 S. Chestnut St.; 36-40 S. Highland St.
Petitioner: Michael Porto
CA Ventures
130 E. Randolph St. – Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60601

Requested Action:

1. A rezoning from R-3, One-Family Dwelling District to R-7, Multiple-Family Dwelling District
2. A Planned Unit Development (PUD) to allow the construction of a five story, 80 unit residential development.
3. Preliminary and Final Plat of Resubdivision to consolidate six lots into one lot.

Variations Required:

4. Chapter 28, Section 5.1-7.3, Minimum Area for Zoning District, to allow the R-7 District to be approx. 1.39 acres where code requires a minimum of 2 acres for the R-7 District.
5. Chapter 28, Section 5.1-7.4, Minimum Lot Size, to allow a 39,587 sq. ft. lot where code requires a minimum of 61,500 sq. ft. in lot size.
6. Chapter 28, Section 5.1-7.6, Required Front Yard, to allow a front yard setback (east side) of 6.8' where code requires a 49' setback.
7. Chapter 28, Section 5.1-7.6, Required Front Yard, to allow a front yard setback (west side) of 20' where code requires a 49' setback.
8. Chapter 28, Section 5.1-7.6, Required Side Yard, to allow a side yard setback of 5' where code requires a 39' setback.
9. Chapter 28, Section 5.1-7.7, Maximum Building Lot Coverage, to allow 72% building lot coverage where code allows a maximum 45% building lot coverage.
10. A variation to the maximum allowable building height to increase the maximum allowable building height from 60' to 63'-8".
11. Chapter 28, Section 5.1-7.13, Maximum Floor Area Ratio, to allow 242% F.A.R. where code limits maximum F.A.R. to 200%.
12. Chapter 28, Section 11.7(a), Loading Requirements, to waive the requirement for one off-street loading space.
13. Chapter 28, Section 6.6-5.1, Permitted Obstructions, to allow certain balconies to project 5.3' into the required front, exterior side, and side yards.
14. Chapter 28, Section 6.6-5.1, Permitted Obstructions, to allow a transformer within the required front yard setback where code requires all transformers to be located outside of all setback areas.
15. Chapter 28, Section 11.2-8, to allow certain drive aisles to be no less than 20' wide where code requires a minimum drive aisle width of 24'.

Attendees:

Michael Porto, CA Ventures
Mike Firsel Atty., Firsel Ross
Mark Hopkins, HKM Architects
Sam Hubbard, Development Planner
John Sigalos, Plan Commissioner
Jay Cherwin, Plan Commissioner
Bruce Green, Plan Commissioner
Lynn Jensen, Plan Commissioner

Project Summary:

The subject property is located along Sigwalt Street between Highland Avenue and Chestnut Avenue, and is currently vacant. The property is within the R-3, One-Family Dwelling District and the developer has proposed rezoning the property into the R-7, Multiple-Family Dwelling District. Additionally, the developer is seeking Planned Unit Development (PUD) approval and Plat of Subdivision approval to consolidate the property into one lot to accommodate a multi-family development. The proposed use of the property is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, which designates the site as High Density Multi-Family. One of the Board's 2017 Strategic Priorities is to facilitate development of this block.

A previous version of this project appeared before the Plan Commission on September 22, 2017, and received a recommendation of approval by a 4-3 vote. Ultimately, the project was denied by the Village Board due to concerns related to parking, density, loading and deliveries, the mass, height, and setbacks of the structure, and the extent of the variations required for the proposed development. Since this meeting, the petitioner has revised their proposal to address some of the concerns raised by the Plan Commission, Village Board, and surrounding community.

The revised plans propose a five-story residential apartment building with a recessed fifth floor. The building has been shifted slightly to the east to increase the separation between the building and the single-family residential areas to the west. The number of units has been reduced from 88 to 80, and the proposed bedroom mix has been modified. The number of on-site parking spaces has increased from 110 to 120 spaces, which now complies with the parking regulations within the R-7 District. Additionally, the Sigwalt Street building setback has been increased to comply with code requirements. Finally, the overall number of required variations has decreased from 15 variations (as approved by the Plan Commission in September of 2017) to 12 variations under the current proposal.

The developer is still proposing a per unit affordable housing contribution of \$25,000 for every affordable unit required but not provided. The affordable housing contribution is calculated as a percentage of the total number of units, and since the number of units has decreased by eight; one less affordable unit is required per the Multi-Family Affordable Housing Policy. Specifically, 13 affordable units were required in conjunction with the proposed 88-unit development, and the revised 80-unit development requires only 12 affordable units. As the developers proposed fee in lieu-of providing these affordable units remains at \$25,000 per unit not provided, the overall contribution amount would be reduced from \$325,000 to \$300,000.

Meeting Discussion:

Mr. Firsell said that as this was the second time this project has come before the Committee, he would be brief and focus only on the changes from the previous proposal. Under the new proposal, there has been a reduction in units (From 86 to 80), and 120 parking spaces will be provided, resulting in a ratio which meets code required parking for the R-7 District. The fifth floor of the proposed building has also been modified, with the exterior walls now being shifted inward, away from the property lines, to reduce the mass of the building.

Mr. Firsell stated that the primary focus of the developers has been complying with the goals and objectives of the Downtown Master Plan, which calls for a 4 to 6 story development on the subject property. The proposed building is 5 stories. The height of the building on the west end is 60 feet, rising to 62 feet from grade on the east end due to the slope of the property. The building as a whole has also been shifted east 4 feet from the previous proposal, increasing the setback along Chestnut Street. The front of the building was also modified from the previous proposal, with a dedicated inset lane added to accommodate deliveries and drop off/pick-up traffic, as well as street parking. The healthy landscaping proposed previously has been unaltered for this new proposal.

Mr. Hopkins explained that the overall footprint of the building is the same as it was in the previous proposal, with slight changes made based on feedback from the various Commissions the project has been presented to. The building has been shifted east towards Highland Avenue, to relieve the setback variation needed on Chestnut. The fifth floor is set back from the main profile of the building, specifically, it is setback 10 feet from the edge of the building on Highland and Chestnut, and setback 13 feet from the edge on the Sigwalt Street side. This has softened the appearance of the building. Changes in colors and cladding have also help to soften the appearance, and previously proposed metal panels have been replaced with siding. The biggest changes to the site plan have been the new parking configuration and drop off/loading zone in front of the building. The previous plan proposed no changes to the existing curb line, whereas this new proposal includes the loading zone, and per neighbor comments, a "knuckle" at the corners which would increase pedestrian safety and define the

new street parking spaces. Currently, the new plan would add 6 street parking spaces, however it is likely that only 5 would be added due to concerns from Engineering.

Mr. Hopkins showed updated renderings and described the changes made in order to soften the appearance of the building. He noted some minor revisions, such as a redesign of the front entry to improve symmetry, and the extension of the “garden” architecture to the street. The color of the pergola and canopy for the roof deck will also be changed, per Design Commission recommendations.

Mr. Hubbard explained that staff was supportive of the project the first time it came before the Plan Commission, and that staff believes the proposed changes to the previous design are positive. Staff is still supportive of the plan as presently proposed; the development complies with the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Master Plan. There are still a significant number of variations required for this project, though the number has dropped from 15 to 12 under the new proposal. Some of the remaining 12 variations have decreased in their extent. Regarding setbacks, staff believes the changes are positive. The project now complies with the code-required setback on Sigwalt, and it has an increased setback on Chestnut. The recessed fifth floor decreased the Floor Area Ratio, and consequently decreases the variation required. The fifth floor overall has been decreased by 21%, which decreased the mass and bulk of the building. Parking now conforms to code requirements.

Mr. Hubbard mentioned that the petitioner has already held a neighborhood meeting regarding the new proposal, and would be holding another the following evening with one of the local condo buildings. At the time that the Staff Report had been drafted, the Design Commission had recommended denial of the project in a 3-2 vote at their January 9th meeting. Mr. Hubbard believed that the Design Commission liked the overall design of the building, but had denied the project due to concerns that it wasn't compatible with the neighborhood.

Mr. Hubbard explained that one night ago, the Design Commission entertained a motion for reconsideration of the project. The motion passed and the project was reconsidered by the Design Commission, which resulted in a 4-1 motion for approval of the project. The Design Commission changed their vote due to the fact that the purview of the Design Commission is limited to the design of the building. Since their previous denial was based on neighborhood context, and the Commission had approved of the overall design, the Design Commission had changed their recommendation to a recommendation of approval.

Mr. Hubbard stated that staff still has a number of recommended approval conditions that should be considered by the Plan Commission and Village Board. He asked that the petitioner provide additional details on the height of the building as during their presentation they stated that the height of the building was 62 feet, however, the plans submitted to staff showed the building as 63 feet and 8 inches in height. From a staff perspective, he recommended that the petitioner try to lower the height of the building in order to reduce the extent of the setback variations, as the required setback is directly related to building height. Additionally, staff believes that moving forward, it will be important for the petitioner to address the standards of approval for variations and planned unit developments, as outlined in the Village code. Staff hopes to see those points integrated into the petitioner's presentation.

Commissioner Sigalos asked what the height would need to be reduced to in order to trigger a change in the setback variation.

Mr. Hubbard explained that the setback variation is proportional to height, for every foot over 45 feet, 1 linear foot of additional setback is required. If the height is reduced by 1 foot, the required setback is reduced by 1 foot.

Commissioner Sigalos asked what changes were made to the proposal between the January 9th Design Commission denial and the Design Commission approval the previous evening.

Mr. Hopkins stated that there were no changes and that it was the same proposal presented at both meetings.

Commissioner Sigalos stated that he believes that the current proposal is greatly improved from the proposal they brought

in a few months ago, particularly in regards to provided parking. The recessed fifth floor is also a notable improvement that diminishes the mass and bulk of the building.

Commissioner Cherwin expressed that while he was not as concerned with parking in the previous proposal, he is glad that it has been addressed and that the petitioner has been reactive to feedback from the neighborhood. He stated that he understood the trade off in moving the parking to Sigwalt from Highland, due to the lack of support. He asked for clarification on the cladding comment, and asked about what “metal” was being removed from the setback portion of the building.

Mr. Hopkins stated that the dark charcoal portions of metal cladding were being replaced with a warm charcoal hardi-board.

Commissioner Cherwin asked if the new rooftop created by recessing the fifth floor would remain a rooftop, or if it would be utilized as community space.

Mr. Hopkins stated that the fifth floor units have balconies on the roof, still recessed from the main profile of the building, however residents would be restricted from walking from those balconies onto the roof. To minimize height, the roof parapet is as small as possible. Access out onto the roof was still a work in progress.

Commissioner Jensen asked if the petitioner believes that the Village Board’s concerns with the previous proposal have been addressed to the extent that they would be receptive to the project.

Mr. Hubbard stated that he does not like to predict the Village Board, though he thinks there have been positive changes in the new proposal, and that the new proposal received positive comments when it went for Early Review before the Village Board.

Commissioner Jensen asked if, during that Early Review meeting, there were any resident comments or if it was open to public comment.

Mr. Hubbard stated that it was a public meeting, but he would need to review the minutes to see if there were any resident comments.

Mr. Firsel stated that he was at the Early Review meeting and that the Trustees were appreciative of some of the changes, but that there were still some questions and items to address. The Trustees had told the petitioner to go back through the process, which the petitioners are now doing and why they are hoping to appear again before the Plan Commission. Mr. Firsel reiterated that they have another neighborhood meeting the following evening with some neighbors to the east in Downtown. Specifically, with residents from Metropolitan Condos and other condo developments that were not on the original mailing list. He stated that he does not know how the Board will react, though they have tried to comply with as much of the code as possible. He also stated that Mr. Hubbard’s points earlier were well taken, and they are not taking any of the variances they are requesting for granted. However, he pointed out that many of the other Downtown developments have similar variances He also stated that, if the proposed changes to code are approved and adopted, that the variances requested for this project would be reduced under those new standards.

Commissioner Jensen stated that he thinks this is a good project, and he hopes the petitioner makes the proposed changes.

Commissioner Green stated that he likes how the fifth floor is set back, and that the design helps the building. He asked if the 63 foot 8 inch height mentioned earlier is to the top of the fifth floor.

Mr. Hopkins replied yes, and that it was to the height of the flat roof inside the parapet. He stated that the building grew by a foot from the last proposal as a result of recessing the fifth floor, as more structure was needed to support it.

Commissioner Green repeated that it was nice the fifth floor was set back, and that it was a plus that the 3 foot setback was to the top of the recessed fifth floor, rather than for a full five story building. He also liked the idea of changing the

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material from metal to siding. He stated that his only concern with the previous proposal was parking, so by bringing the provided parking up to code, the petitioner eliminated that concern. He stated that he believes the project is a positive, and he looks forward to seeing the petitioner at Plan Commission.

RECOMMENDATION

The Conceptual Plan Review Committee was supportive of the proposal and advised that the petitioner should move forward.

Bruce Green, Chair
CONCEPTUAL PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
Sam Hubbard, Recorder