



WHEATON CITY COUNCIL PLANNING SESSION MINUTES

MAYOR PHILIP J. SUESS

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL BARBIER | COUNCILWOMAN ERICA BRAY-PARKER | COUNCILMAN SCOTT BROWN

COUNCILWOMAN SUZANNE FITCH | COUNCILWOMAN LYNN ROBBINS | COUNCILMAN SCOTT WELLER

WHEATON CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 303 W WESLEY STREET, WHEATON, ILLINOIS 60187

Monday, May 23, 2022

1. Call to Order

The regular Wheaton City Council Meeting was called to order at 6:59 by Mayor Suess. The following were:

Physically Present: Mayor Suess
Councilman Barbier
Councilman Brown
Councilwoman Fitch
Councilwoman Robbins

Absent: Councilwoman Bray-Parker

Electronically Present: Councilman Weller

City Staff Present: Michael Dzugan, City Manager
John Duguay, Assistant City Manager
Jim Kozik, Director of Economic Development
Susan Bishel, Public Information Officer
Allison Kaleta, Public Relations Coordinator

2. Public Comment

Frank Hudetz, 1617 Whitman Lane, asked the Council to keep the senior citizen population of Wheaton at the forefront when discussing changes to Roosevelt Road regarding affordable housing along the corridor.

Ron Almiron, 455 W. Front Street, requested the Council pass a preservation ordinance for historic buildings along Roosevelt Road in order to turn single family plots into bed and breakfasts to keep the historic nature of the building as well as boosting travel revenue into Wheaton.

Elizabeth Hain discussed her thoughts on the Roosevelt Road plan. She stated she hopes that the permitted uses in the appendix do not lead to Roosevelt Road becoming a series of strip malls and expressed concern about the noise and light pollution that strip malls cause.

Bonnie Gahr stated her dislike for strip malls along Roosevelt Road. She also requested that more trees be planted along Roosevelt Road.

3. Approval of May 9, 2022 City Council Planning Session Minutes

The Council approved the May 9, 2022 City Council Planning Session Minutes.

4. Comprehensive Plan/Market Study/Zoning Ordinance Update – Roosevelt Road Corridor Study

Director of Economic Development Kozik presented a brief timeline of the Roosevelt Road Corridor Plan. In 2018, Camiros Ltd. was brought on to create a plan for Roosevelt Road. In the summer of 2019, an aggressive plan was presented to the Council that was not well received by the community or the Council. Camiros then developed a revised plan that was presented in early 2020. Due to the global pandemic, public engagement and review of the plan was not possible. In June of 2021, a market study was updated along Roosevelt Road to factor in the effects of the pandemic on the businesses along Roosevelt Road. The revised market study and Roosevelt Road plan were released in early 2022. A public survey was sent out and public input sessions were held to review feedback and comments that residents had regarding the updated plan.

Jeanne Lindwall, representing Camiros Ltd., reviewed the Roosevelt Road Corridor Plan with the Council. The purpose of the plan is to refine the City's vision, guide redevelopment and ensure recommendations that are responsive, respectful, and effective to the City.

Ms. Lindwall reviewed the updates to the plan that reflect community feedback. Boundaries have been refined with sectors, building heights have been reduced, suggested future land uses have been limited, historic structures are now addressed, implementation strategies are presented, and clarification of policy verse implementation once the plan is adopted was explained.

The new plan proposes that Sector one of Roosevelt Road, from Carlton to Main Street, continue to maintain the lowest intensity of use in the Corridor. This area includes low-intensity office uses and single-family homes. The maximum building height would remain at 35 feet in Sector One and would require 15 feet of front setback and 20 feet for abutting nonresidential and 30 feet for abutting residential in the rear. Land use would be for offices, residential, and low-intensity limited services that encourage adaptive reuse of existing structures.

One Councilmember asked for clarification regarding strip malls and if they were already present in Sector One. City Staff stated that there are strip malls along Roosevelt Road, near Sector One, but are further west and are not included in the Corridor Plan. Low intensity commercial uses could be included in Sector One, but it would be primarily office-uses. A potential goal for Sector One could be to return to a mainly residential area, which it once was. Landscaping buffers would be included in future development regulations if an office or commercial use was approved for Sector One.

In response to a Council question regarding whether setbacks were realistic for Sector One lots, City Staff stated that the setbacks are in correlation with the lot sizes in Sector One, which accommodate for shallow lots along Roosevelt Road.

In the proposed plan for Sector Two of Roosevelt Road, from Main Street to Chase Street, suggested uses are low to moderate in intensity of use. Sector Two has varying lot depth to the north and south of Roosevelt Road and the back halves of most blocks are residential. Due to the developable area within Sector Two, there is some variation for the recommended land use characteristics. The maximum building height in Sector Two would be 35 feet. Buildings must locate within 20 feet of the front lot line in Sector Two. The minimum rear setback would be 15 feet for abutting nonresidential lots and 30 feet for abutting residential lots. Auto repair shops and gas stations are not allowed in Sector Two. Large parcels could be used for office buildings, residential, limited retail and service uses and restaurants. Small parcels would be for offices, residential and low intensity limited services that encourage reuse of existing structures.

The plan suggests Sector Three of Roosevelt Road, from Chase Street to President Street, has a moderate intensity. Sector Three has predominantly larger parcels to the south and shallower parcels to the north. Both sides are adjacent to residential neighborhoods. The land use for Sector three is similar to Sector Two. Office use, residential, retail, service, restaurants, multi-family homes, banks and financial institutions could all be within Sector Three. Auto repair shops and gas stations are not suggested to be allowed in Sector Three. The maximum building height would be 40 feet. Buildings would be required to locate within 20 feet of the front lot line in Sector Three. The minimum rear setback would be 15 feet for abutting nonresidential lots and 30 feet for abutting residential lots.

Sector Four of Roosevelt Road, between President and the eastern boundary of Wheaton, has a moderate to high intensity, particularly on the south side of the road, as suggested in the plan. Sector Four contains large parcels to the south, often occupying the width of a full block, which could accommodate more intense commercial uses. The north side has shallower lots, directly adjacent to residential neighborhoods, which will require additional consideration to mitigate potential impacts on the residential uses. Land use could be for offices, residential space, retail services, restaurants, banks/financial institutions, auto repair shops, gas stations and drive throughs. The maximum building height proposed is 40 feet. The minimum front setback would be 25 feet, and the minimum rear setback would be 15 feet for abutting nonresidential and 30 feet for abutting residential.

Council members thanked Camiros for their work on the Roosevelt Road Corridor and the updated plan, stating that the changes are well received. Council members also thanked the public for their participation in the public input sessions.

One Council suggestion requested that the vision statement be revised to eliminate the “gateway to the community” aspect of the vision statement. The Council discussed challenges preventing the City from adding sidewalks throughout the corridor, including that the Illinois Department of Transportation owns and maintains existing sidewalks, and the City would need to acquire easements in some cases.

One Councilmember asked for clarification regarding the maximum building height recommendation and if it corresponded with a certain number of stories. City Staff clarified that usually buildings are 10 feet per floor.

To answer a Council question regarding rear yard setbacks that are referenced in the plan and where those would exist along Roosevelt Road, City Staff stated that if the use backs up to residential, there would be a greater setback but if it backs up to commercial use, there is a smaller setback requirement. City Staff explained that on the eastern end of the Corridor, on the south side of the street, there is double fronted commercial use where one commercial property has another commercial property behind it, as an example.

Clarification was requested by one Councilmember regarding commercial property that is functioning in a certain sector but does not fit in with the new revised plan and recommended uses. City Staff explained that if, for example, the plan is adopted and a gas station is functioning in sector three, it will be allowed to remain there. However, if it goes out of business for longer than 18 months, it would not be allowed to resume operation as a gas station because the use is not approved for Sector Three with the new Roosevelt Road plan.

The Council discussed including the topic of safety within the plan, including shared parking arrangements which will improve the flow of traffic and eliminate the challenge of getting in and out of the parking lots along Roosevelt Road.

One Council suggestion was to generalize the programs and grants that the City may utilize when implementing this plan rather than making direct reference to certain funding opportunities.

One Council member asked for clarification of a goal that referenced the deconversion of office uses back to residential uses along Roosevelt Road. City Staff stated that this is strictly for low-intensity housing, such as single-family use or a duplex. It all depends on the size of the unit, but there would not be construction of a multi-unit apartment complex within those specific sectors. The goal is to maintain the original structures, such as offices that have been converted from an original single-family home.

One Councilmember restated that meeting the needs of the residents is important and making sure that the historical value is maintained within the City and along Roosevelt Road. Flooding and stormwater were also referenced along Roosevelt Road and requesting that Camiros and the City be cognizant of those issues moving forward.

Clarification was requested by One Council member with reference to the use of buildings with retail on the first floor and residential on the higher floors. City Staff stated that some of the issue is zoning related.

To answer one Council member's question on the accuracy of data on anticipated uses, staff explained that adding residential is the strongest use of the space. Retail uses could prove to be more challenging due to the shallow depth of many lots in the corridor.

One Councilmember asked for clarification on how this plan will be effective for the City, as referenced in the plan's vision statement. Camiros Ltd. explained that if the City uses the plan as a reference when developments come in front of the council for approval, the plan will then be effective as a guide for the City.

In response to a question regarding developers and if they were sought out for their opinions, City Staff explained that comments from developers regarding the addition of residential areas and flexibility were received as well as some gas station developer comments with concern about the limitations imposed on gas stations.

One Councilmember brought up the issue of a developer combining parcels to create a higher-density area that does not correlate with the sector it is in. City Staff stated that there is language within the plan that discourages the combining of parcels, and the actual enforcement language would come from zoning changes.

Next steps were discussed by the Council and City staff. The next step would be to conduct a public hearing and then adopt an ordinance amending the comprehensive plan, adding the Roosevelt Road Corridor Plan as a section. A final draft with changes from this meeting's discussion would be prepared before the public hearing. Amending the zoning regulations and then implementing the plan would be the next step after the plan is added to the comprehensive plan.

One Councilmember asked for a timeline on how long this process could take. City Staff stated that amending the City's comprehensive plan is important to start implementing these changes. Zoning ordinances cannot move forward until the plan is added.

It was discussed that implementation of plans like the Roosevelt Road Corridor Plan could be created for other places of Wheaton where updates would be beneficial.

Council directed staff to move forward with making changes to the plan that were discussed at the meeting and host a public hearing regarding the final draft of the Roosevelt Road Corridor Plan. It was also requested that City Staff create a plan on how to implement the discussed changes with the zoning board in a timely manner.

5. City Council/City Staff Comments

Councilman Barbier commended Wheaton for the improvements that have been made in the Downtown regarding new restaurants and the Hale Street Tents.

Mayor Suess reminded residents that the Memorial Day Parade will take place on Monday, May 30. The parade will start at 10 a.m. at Memorial Park and venture to the Wheaton Cemetery for a ceremony at 11 a.m.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison Kaleta