

# **MINUTES OF THE OTTAWA PLAN COMMISSION MEETING**

## **May 23, 2011**

Chairman Tom Ganiere called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Ottawa City Council Chambers.

### **ROLL CALL**

Present: Barron (arrived 7:45 p.m.), Burns, Less, Perry, Reagan, Stone  
Absent: Buiting, Howarter, Perry  
Others: City Planner Tami Huftel

### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes of the April 25, 2011 meeting were approved as published.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **a. Public Hearing – Conditional Use Permit – 1127 LaSalle Street**

John Groesbeck representing Benner Family Pharmacy explained to OCP that their company would like to purchase 1127 LaSalle Street as a relocation site for their current pharmacy located in the Columbus Square Mall in the 1100 block of Columbus Street. The new location will allow for a larger retail space area and a drive-thru proposed to be located at the southwest corner of the building. A Conditional Use Permit is needed because of the drive-thru request and the retail space would exceed the 4000 s.f. limit in C-6 Districts. Ganiere advised that the OPC members would be allowed to ask questions first and then the audience members. John Stone asked for an explanation of the drive-thru set up and daily traffic expected. Groesbeck said if the company purchases the 32' x 110' lot behind the building there is room for 3 vehicles to stack up at the pick-up window. They expect 110-120 prescriptions filled daily with about 30-50 vehicles using the drive-thru. Reagan questioned if three was enough spaces if there is a long wait time as she doesn't want traffic stacked on W. Superior. Per engineer Dean Chaukey, there is enough room for a second lane staging area on the west side of the lot. Reagan also expressed concern about access to Illinois Office Supply's delivery door and if the power poles located in the alley would be a problem. Chaukey noted there are no current plans to move the poles. Stone questioned if noise from the orders would be an issue for area residents but Groesbeck said (unlike a drive-thru restaurant) there will be no intercoms/speakers so there should be no noise issues. Less said he was concerned about the current condition of the alley and what the additional traffic would do. Tami said the alley condition can be addressed.

There being no further questions from the OPC, audience member Karen Walsh Nussbaum from Ottawa Funeral Home reminded members that the funeral home has parking lots on both sides of the alley's south end and she is concerned about those people crossing the alley. She also asked if the use is granted would it be a permanent use for whatever business it housed or only for this current one. Ganiere advised the Conditional Use could be for this (pharmacy) business only. The tenant in the house on W. Superior on the west side of the alley said she was concerned about the safety of her child with the additional vehicle traffic. Nussbaum added that the alley is currently used a lot by children as a cut thru. Jeff Sheppard, VP of Illinois Office Supply, said his main concern was about semi-truck deliveries which can be only once a week or heavier traffic at election time. There is no loading dock for the semi's at this building so they use lift

gate trucks in the alley which can take 15 to 30 minutes to load/unload. There is no set time for delivery(s). Ganiere said he liked the idea of a vacant building being filled but not necessarily the alley drive-thru and that although screening for the house on the west side of the alley is recommended it would impede the semi's alley access for entrance. Julie added that semi's already cross her property to get into the alley. Tom reminded everyone that the OPC only makes a recommendation to the City Council and that they can sustain or overturn the OPC vote. Nussbaum questioned whose responsibility it is to clear the alley of snow. Stone suggested the City Engineer's opinion be sought. Pharmacy co-owner Julie Ramza concurred that the alley is in bad shape but from the big trucks not customer vehicles. She added that their family-owned hometown business is trying to make things easier for their customers of whom over 85% are 65 or older. Nussbaum asked if the alley is blocked who would keep pharmacy customers from cutting through funeral home property to get out? Burns commented that she liked the idea of this downtown improvement and that although there is not a perfect solution for all, it is a public alley. Nussbaum asked how this drive-thru would affect the needs of their crematory planned for the west side of the alley. Tami commented that the request for the crematory is now null and void since one year has passed without any progress being made since its approval.

There being no further discussion or questions, Tami indicated that 2 separate votes should be taken. Ganiere asked Ramza if they wanted more time to evaluate the situation and meet with the neighbors but she and Groesbeck declined saying it wouldn't do any good. It was moved by Less and seconded by Stone that the OPC recommend the City Council approve the Conditional Use for use by a retail establishment exceeding 4000 s.f. in a C-6 District. Oral Vote: 4-ayes, 1-nay, 1 abstention. Motion carried. It was moved by Burns and seconded by Ganiere that the OPC recommend the City Council approve the request for a drive-thru window for the business wishing to locate at 1127 LaSalle Street. Oral vote: 1-aye, 3-nays, 2- abstentions. Motion failed.

Ganiere advised Ramza and Groesbeck that these recommendations would be referred to the City Council and invited the owners to attend the Council meeting on Tuesday, June 7 at 7 p.m. to represent their request.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy C. Stisser  
Recording Secretary