

May 15, 2007

To the Honorable Common Council
Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee
City of Milwaukee

Dear Committee Members:

File No. 070034 relates to the change in zoning from General Planned Development (PD) to Detailed Planned Development (DPD) known as Downer Avenue Redevelopment, Phase 1, on land located on the Southeast Corner of East Bellevue Avenue and North Downer Avenue, in the 3rd Aldermanic District.

This file would approve the site plan and building design for the first phase of new construction in the Council approved Downer Avenue general planned development district. A 4-story mixed use building with 134 parking stalls, bank and retail tenant space for the 16,059 square foot property located at 2574-90 North Downer Avenue would be constructed. The uses, height, setbacks, massing, number of parking stalls and retail space have been approved in the established General Planned Development.

The proposed multi-use building will have 7,000 square feet of street-level retail space (one tenant would be a bank) and an open parking garage. The lower level, levels 2-4, and roof (level 5) consist of parking. Total parking spaces would be 134 spaces, of which 29 will be dedicated for public use. Main entrances would be located on Downer Avenue. The drive-through for the bank tenant, as well as lower level parking, is accessed from Bellevue; the drive-through exits onto Downer Avenue. Parking levels 2-5 (roof) are accessed from Downer Avenue.

On April 23, 2007, a public hearing was held and at that time several people were opposed to the project, stating that they would rather have the surface parking lot remain, and that the structure was too close to an abutting residence. The City Plan Commission referred this item to staff pursuant to the formal request of the State Historical Society's right to negotiate per State Statutes Chps. 44.42 and 66.1111. Because this property is directly adjacent to a State and National Register historic district, State law allows the State preservation office to negotiate with city government regarding strategies to mitigate the adverse impact on historic buildings in the adjacent district. According to staff in the state preservation office and the City Attorney's office, any recommendations made through the negotiation process are advisory.

The Department of City Development has been in contact with the state preservation office to discuss the project, and on May 10th the State provided the department with recommendations regarding the design of the building. The State determined that adverse impact would be eliminated if the building was constructed no closer than 20' from the west corner and no more than 30' from the north corner of the abutting residence at 2623 E Bellevue Pl. The department clarified to the State that the detailed plan with proposed setbacks of 5'11' at the west corner and 44.9' at the north corner was to be considered before the Plan Commission and Common Council.

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Since the proposal is consistent with the approved General Planned Development (GPD), the City Plan Commission at its regular meeting on May 14, 2007, recommended approval of the subject file, conditioned on working with staff on final building design details .

Sincerely,

Rocky Marcoux
Executive Secretary
City Plan Commission of Milwaukee

cc: Ald. Michael D'Amato