

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO  
PLAN COMMISSION

BOARD MEMBERS

Val Gomez, President  
Anthony Serna, Vice President  
Lilia Ramos, Secretary  
Joanne Moricz, Commissioner  
Chanthini Fowler, Commissioner  
Douglass Sloss, Commissioner  
William Allen, Commissioner  
Lydia Lopez, Commissioner  
Stacy Winfield, Commissioner

Regular Meeting Minutes  
(Via Zoom Videoconference)  
Monday, June 21, 2021 @ 4:30 p.m.

Reported for Fissinger & Associates  
By: Lisa Pena

CALL TO ORDER: 4:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present in Chambers: Val Gomez, Anthony Serna,  
William Allen

Present Via Zoom: Lilia Ramos, Joanne Moricz,  
Chanthini Fowler, Douglass Sloss, Lydia Lopez,  
Stacy Winfield

STAFF: Present in Chambers: Richard Morrisroe, Douglas  
Powers, Joseph Allegretti, Ateria Allen, Mireya  
Huizar.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Regular Meeting of Monday,  
June 7, 2021

Comments/Questions: None

Motion to approve June 7, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes made  
by Anthony Serna. Second by William Allen.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

1 NEW BUSINESS:

2 CITY PLANNER'S REPORT:

3 MR. GOMEZ: We'll move on to New Business. We have City  
4 Planner's Report. We have three Safe Haven Foundations, 4721  
5 Alexander Avenue, 4742 Kennedy Avenue and 420 Vernon Avenue.  
6 Mr. Powers.

7 MR. POWERS: Thank you, Mr. President. Good evening.  
8 So today we're here looking at three properties. Actually a  
9 little bit more than that as well. And I believe that we  
10 have a representative here with us from the Safe Haven  
11 Project.

12 So what I'd like to do is just give a brief  
13 introduction and then afford them the opportunity to speak.  
14 Then we can go into any additional questions, comments or  
15 concerns at that time.

16 So approximately a little over a year and a half  
17 ago the City started working with the Safe Haven Group on  
18 trying to establish some new housing within the Calumet area.  
19 The end result of that is what we're seeing today.

20 There are three proposed properties for this  
21 location. And this will allow for these houses to be built  
22 and fund.

23 They meet the Plan Commission's approval  
24 requirements. They went through the Tech Review Committee  
25 last week. And all necessary corrections have been  
presented.

Joe, are you by any chance here with me?

MR. DeLARAUZE: Yeah.

MR. POWERS: Do you want to explain a little more in  
detail?

MR. DeLARAUZE: (Audio problems) Yeah. This is Joe  
DeLarauze. Thank you for having us. I'm on here with Safe  
Haven Foundation.

(Inaudible homes Calumet neighborhood. We are very  
excited to present module housing. We're very excited to be  
here and thanks for having us. (Inaudible) do you want to  
give a really quick intro?

1 MS. VAZQUEZ-ROWLAND: Yes. Hi, everyone. My name is  
2 Neli Vazquez-Rowland, President and co-founder of A Safe  
3 Haven Foundation.

4 And last week we just did a ground breaking in  
5 Hobart for a 75 unit HUD-VASH Program. And we're very  
6 excited about the possibility of doing a project in East  
7 Chicago.

8 I know Devin is also on the call. He is the  
9 president of KMA Development and Property Management Company.  
10 And that's the company that does all of our development and  
11 serves as our owner's rep and property management.

12 So we own and manage properties throughout the  
13 Chicagoland area which include transitional supportive  
14 affordable veteran and permanent affordable housing and  
15 senior housing.

16 We're here and we're happy to answer any questions  
17 you may have as we're very interested in helping to bring  
18 some development to East Chicago that is much needed.

19 MR. ROWLAND: As Neli mentioned I'm Devin Rowland,  
20 Present of KMA Companies. We're an affordable housing  
21 development company and management company. And we're really  
22 excited to be working on this project.

23 As mentioned we've already been working on it for  
24 over a year. It's been a wild ride just with Covid. And  
25 we're to the point where we're very close to potentially  
building these homes.

We hope to come off the ground here in fall. And  
we can deliver a nice product in East Chicago. We've been  
working hand in hand with the City. It's an exciting project  
to say the least.

Thank you for having us.

MR. POWERS: Thank you for being here.

Today we're being presented with a request for  
three houses as you mentioned at 4721 Alexander Avenue, 4742  
Kennedy Avenue and 420 Vernon Avenue.

These are three separate single-family homes. They  
each meet the development plan requirements of the EC City  
Code Ordinance. Anything that had not has since been revised  
or approved through the BZA.

1           These three homes are the ones that are currently  
2 being constructed. And then there may be the potential for  
3 more in the future if I am not mistaken.

4           MR. GOMEZ: Are there any questions or comments from the  
5 Commissioners?

6           MR. SLOSS: Yes, Mr. President, I have a question if I  
7 may. A couple of questions actually.

8           How many hundred square feet are these projected to  
9 be and what is the projected cost once somebody goes to buy  
10 them?

11           MR. POWERS: If you look at the site plans of the  
12 proposed building, they do show the actual size on them on  
13 each of the proposed plans.

14           Joe, do you have an answer for the final cost? How  
15 close are we on the estimates?

16           Joe, are you on mute?

17           MR. DeLARAUZE: I am sorry about that. One sec here.  
18 (Audio problems) So the dimensions on the houses are 48 by  
19 40. I believe the question was with surface. The models,  
20 the model home that we selected 650 square feet. So it's a  
21 really good size.

22           And then in terms of what they would be costing  
23 we're looking at (inaudible).

24           MR. ROWLAND: So these homes are supposed to be  
25 affordable. So they're supposed to be 50 percent AMI which  
in the area is around \$40,000 a year. So we're pricing them  
for the workforce in East Chicago.

          The intent is to have East Chicago residents  
benefit from these homes. And they are priced around 160,000  
as mentioned.

          And we're still working through what the final  
pricing would be. Right now we just kind of have a range.  
And average we're right now at about 160,000.

          And as mentioned, Joe briefly mentioned that we are  
working on construction cost. So, you know, to the extent  
that contractors within East Chicago are interested in  
providing numbers.

1 I know we worked with the City to develop a list.  
2 But feel free to reach out to us directly if you're a painter  
3 for example that is looking to quote and bid on these homes.

3 MR. SLOSS: Thank you.

4 MR. GOMEZ: Any other questions or comments?

5 MS. WINFIELD: Yes. I have a question, Mr. President.  
6 Will this be coming in front of the Council? I am going to  
7 give a couple of questions at once.

7 Are you going to come in front of the Council to  
8 present these? And is this a private company or are you  
9 going through the City? My question is who qualifies for  
10 these homes and how will they be presented to the residents.

10 MR. ROWLAND: That's a great question. We've been  
11 working with the City to do a community meeting.

11 We fully intend on having a series of community  
12 meetings to present the rendering and the pricing and start  
13 working with the City. I know they have a list of buyers in  
14 the area that work with them for their Home Buyers Assistance  
15 Program.

14 So we'll have a series of presentations. And we'll  
15 do that here before we break ground, well before we break  
16 ground.

16 And right now we're just trying to figure out what  
17 the construction costs are. A lot of things are changing in  
18 the construction industry.

18 So we're up to a GC right now to get numbers. Once  
19 we know that number we'll be able to do a community  
20 presentation.

20 And we have been working with the City for about a  
21 year. They do have a huge stake in this development.  
22 They've been working with us on the way it looks in terms of  
23 cosmetics from the outside, inside, you know, garages and  
24 things. So we've been working very close with the City.

23 And KMA is a for-profit developer. We're acting as  
24 the owner's rep on this project. And A Safe Haven Foundation  
25 is the awardee of the grant.

25 Does that answer the question?

1 MS. WINFIELD: Well, it was in front of the Council with  
2 the presentation. I love the homes, the models. I seen this  
3 before. Will you be coming back in front of the Council with  
4 this presentation?

5 MR. ROWLAND: I have to defer to the City and their  
6 process. I'm not sure.

7 MS. VAZQUEZ-ROWLAND: We would come by invitation. Or  
8 if you want we can ask if they would allow us to do that.

9 MS. WINFIELD: I know the Third District Councilman  
10 would be very interested in it. Just looking at paperwork I  
11 am excited about it.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Long overdue.

13 MS. WINFIELD: Yes, sir.

14 MS. VAZQUEZ-ROWLAND: Just to clarify A Safe Haven  
15 Foundation would be the owner of these properties.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, they would sell them  
17 though.

18 MS. VAZQUEZ-ROWLAND: We would sell them. We're  
19 technically the owner that's selling the properties.

20 MS. WINFIELD: I lost you. Who did you say was the  
21 owner?

22 MS. VAZQUEZ-ROWLAND: The Foundation, the nonprofit.  
23 It's the nonprofit that is actually the owner and we will be  
24 the seller of these properties.

25 MS. WINFIELD: Thank you.

MR. GOMEZ: Is there a grant involved?

MR. POWERS: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. President, I have a question.  
Actually a comment. I apologize. But I didn't hear the  
square footage in the home. Did you say 652 square feet?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah. That's right.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And, Mr. Powers, this question is  
for you. Is this the same home that came before the BZA?

1 MR. POWERS: So the property on Vernon is the one that  
2 came in front of the BZA for the development variance, that  
is correct.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So these are just additional  
4 properties?

5 MR. POWERS: Yes. So each of these properties were  
6 reviewed for technical correctness before or approved by the  
Technical Review Committee. It was required for one of the  
properties to get a developmental variance.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm sorry. I could barely hear  
8 you. I think I got the gist of it.

9 MR. POWERS: They're all good now.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

11 MR. GOMEZ: Mr. Morrisroe would like to say something.

12 MR. MORRISROE: Richard Morrisroe, former Acting City  
13 Planner and Assistant City attorney.

14 The reason I asked to speak is Doug has been part  
15 of this for the last six months. However this has been going  
on for a year and a half. And before that for another at  
least six months because this project involves the State, HUD  
and the City.

16 The state granted money and requested different  
17 proposals for this project. The State and the City decided  
that Safe Haven would be the best, was the best qualified of  
18 the three or four entities that offered to fulfill the grant  
and to build the homes.

19 Now, the homes, the lot, these are three lots,  
20 three 25-foot lots. So 75 foot across the front and about  
the same depth as the housing in the area which is generally  
a 120 feet.

21 And we look forward to this. Doug, has been doing  
22 a great job with James Portalatin and Frank Rivera who have  
been part of this and have worked hard for really up to two  
23 years now of trying to comply with the State's opportunity  
and yet the many requirements that the State has required of  
24 the City.

25 It probably would be a wonderful idea to have a

1 Council presentation. However as I understand it the funding  
2 of this is something that has been part of the package that  
3 the State helped put together. And at this point it is not  
4 looking for additional funding from the City Council.

5 However that will be straightened out. And I am  
6 sure that Corporation Counsel, Carla Morgan, will work with  
7 the President of the Common Council to put together a  
8 presentation.

9 Are there any questions?

10 MR. GOMEZ: Any questions of Mr. Morrisroe?

11 MR. MORRISROE: Thank you.

12 MR. GOMEZ: Are there any other questions or comments on  
13 this project?

14 Mr. Powers, we're being asked today to approve the  
15 foundations?

16 MR. POWERS: So today we're being asked for the approval  
17 of these three sites that they have submitted, the site  
18 plans, design layout. So this would effectively allow for  
19 them to start obtaining building permits.

20 MR. GOMEZ: You're asking for approval of the site  
21 plans?

22 MR. POWERS: That is correct.

23 MR. GOMEZ: Any further questions?

24 MR. POWERS: Yes. The building as well. It's part of  
25 the site plan, yes.

Comments/Questions: None

Motion to approve A Safe Have Project Site Plans for 4721  
Alexander Avenue, 4742 Kennedy Avenue and 420 Vernon Avenue  
made by Anthony Serna. Second by William Allen.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

MR. GOMEZ: Thank you, everyone.

OLD BUSINESS: None.



1 COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: None.

2 PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

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4 \* Next Regular Meeting Date: Wednesday, July 7,  
2021 @ 4:30 p.m.

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6 Motion to adjourn was made by Anthony Serna. Second by  
William Allen.

7 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
8 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

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9 \* Meeting ended at 4:51 p.m.

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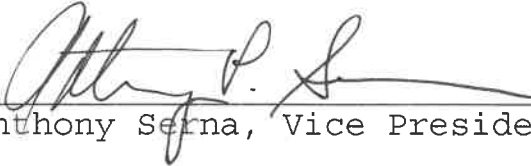
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Approval of Meeting Minutes of  
Monday, June 21, 2021  
Approved and Signed July 7, 2021

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Val Gomez, President

  
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Anthony Serna, Vice President

Lilia Ramos / Zoom  
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Lilia Ramos, Secretary

Joanne Moricz / Zoom  
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Joanne Moricz, Commissioner

Stacy Winfield / Zoom  
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Stacy Winfield, Commissioner

Douglass Sloss / Zoom  
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Douglass Sloss, Commissioner

William Allen / Zoom  
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Lydia Lopez, Commissioner

Chanthini Fowler / Zoom  
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Chanthini Fowler, Commissioner

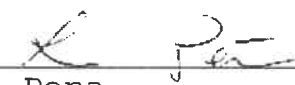
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Lisa Pena, a competent and duly qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my personal direction.

I further certify that the foregoing typewritten transcript constitutes minutes of said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Portage, Indiana, this 2nd day of July, 2021.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Pena  
Notary Public Porter County  
Certified Shorthand Reporter  
License Number 084-003483

