

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, August 15, 2022

BOARD MEMBERS:

Valeriano Gomez, President
William Allen, Vice-President
Lilia Ramos, Secretary
Joanne Moricz, Commissioner
Chanthini Fowler, Commissioner
Douglas Sloss, Commissioner
Grayling Gordon, Commissioner
Lydia Lopez, Commissioner
Stacy Winfield, Commissioner

STAFF:

Richard Morrisroe
Debbra Gritters

Reported for Fissinger & Associates, Ltd.

By: Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR RPR

Call to Order: 4:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Present in Chambers: Val Gomez, William
Allen, Lilia Ramos, Joanne Moricz, Douglas
Sloss, Grayling Gordon, Lydia Lopez, Stacy
Winfield

APPEARING REMOTE: Chanthini Fowler

STAFF - Present in Chambers: Richard Morrisroe
Debbra Gritters

MR. GOMEZ: First on the agenda, we have
approval of minutes of the regular meeting, Monday,
August 1, 2022. Entertain a motion to approve as
written.

MR. SLOSS: So moved.

MR. ALLEN: Second.

MR. GOMEZ: Roll call.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None
Opposed: None

MR. GOMEZ: Motion carries.
We'll move on to New Business. We

1 have the City Planner's Report. We have one item,
2 Prairie Crossing final plat. Mr. Morrisroe?

3 MR. MORRISROE: Good afternoon,
4 Commissioners. Where is this map? Where are we talking
5 about?

6 MR. SLOSS: That's where the parking lot
7 used to be, back in there, for the hospital.

8 MR. MORRISROE: Parking lot and what
9 else?

10 MR. GOMEZ: The Lutheran church.

11 MS. RAMOS: Is that what used to be
12 called the Ponderosa?

13 MR. MORRISROE: I didn't know of that
14 designation.

15 MS. RAMOS: They would cut that whole lot
16 in the back. That's what I wanted to know, is that the
17 one behind there?

18 MR. MORRISROE: Now, these lots don't go
19 all the way back. If you notice from Lot 5 through --
20 down to Lot B, Utilities, I guess you call it the
21 transmission center or something. And then there is at
22 least the possibility of 145th Street going through
23 there, which is part of this plan.

24 We are talking about five lots
25 running along Elm Street where the parking lots were
and we are talking about two lots, 6 and 7, which are
along Purdue Drive, and then when you get to 19, 18 and
beyond there you begin to already have development. Our
police chief built a home for his family on Lots 18 and
19, 3 or 5 years ago. So that's where this is.

Will Allen worked on this actually
more than I did, between Will and I, we'll answer any
questions. Will, is there anything you want to add?

MR. ALLEN: We developed plans with the
Engineering Department for Elm Street to establish
utilities for future development in the area that has
Lots 1 through 7, which we are calling Phase 1. In the
area where it states, one part, that will be slated as
Phase 2, which we are slowly working on in the
background.

1 As Mr. Morrisroe had mentioned, that
2 future plan is to have a road that extends from Elm
3 Street all the way over to Alder, and establishing
4 approximately ten more properties. Again, that's part
5 of Phase 2, so still in the works.

6 So, today, for Phase 1, for Lots 1
7 through 7, we have coordinated with NIPSCO and other
8 utilities that currently exist within this area.
9 NIPSCO, when it comes to their underground gas, their
10 electrical is overhead, and we also have Comcast and A T
11 & T services in the area as well.

12 So on the map, if you are looking at
13 Elm Street, facing towards the properties 1 through 5,
14 you will see a small space of ten feet, which abuts up
15 to the east side of Elm Street, that is where the
16 proposed sewer will go that will service Lots 1 through
17 5 for sanitary. And then 25 feet denotes the amount of
18 space that needs to be free before a structure can be
19 built on that lot. On the southern portion of the area,
20 for let's say Lot 5, you will see ten feet on each side
21 of the bolded line that runs east and west of Lot 5,
22 that will be where they will -- they being NIPSCO --
23 will install their underground utility for electrical
24 and gas. And then they will continue, as it heads north
25 and southbound in between Lots 1 through 5 and the
existing ones for 19, going all the way down to 17, and
then 6 and 7. So that small gap, 15 feet, is where they
will be putting their utilities in, relocating them.

16 MR. MORRISROE: And they are being
17 advised, of course, that the City hopes to extend those
18 utilities farther, so they will be left in a way with
19 easy hookup if we move another 4 or 5 lots below there,
20 below 5.

21 MS. WINFIELD: If you would send notices
22 out to the residents over there. I know you sent a
23 newsletter, but I'm talking about the residents because
24 it's going to effect those residents in that area.

25 I would also like to have a walk
through, get a walk through for that so if someone asks
me about it, I can explain it to them.

I also think you need to get in
touch with council members at large for this direct
area, and these are questions that we need to be able to
answer to the community because it is going to effect
them. Now that we have homes being built, I want to
know exactly. Looking on paper is one thing, I want to
see what you are talking about.

1 I know the property next to St. Paul
2 Lutheran, next to the Chief's house and going back. I
3 really need to see now you are dealing with the stadium
4 where the Little League plays at. So now we are talking
5 about in that area where they park, is that going to be
6 taken away? Is it going to effect that Little League
7 field?

8 And then the extra, where you are
9 talking here on Alder, I want to really know where you
10 are talking about, because looking on paper -- you can
11 show me on paper all you want, but if I can get a walk
12 through here to maybe show me where everything is
13 happening.

14 MR. ALLEN: That's fine. It's mostly
15 conceptual for Phase 2. It's very, very preliminary.
16 So Phase 1, the existing NIPSCO has utilities that are
17 going through these lots that service the existing homes
18 and the old church that used to be out here. Right now
19 we are just trying to work with them and get those
20 relocated. I mean at this point we are not erecting
21 structures.

22 MS. WINFIELD: But I still want to see
23 the area, I know the residents are going to, once they
24 see you starting to work, the questions are going to
25 start coming. So I am asking, please let the residents
in that area know what is going on, because questions
are going to arise and we have to have some type of
meeting for those residents. I will be willing to have
a meeting so it can be explained. I know I am talking
ahead of time, but as soon as you start putting flags
and NIPSCO is there, they start coming out, the
residents are going to start asking questions.

MR. MORRISROE: Are you suggesting that
the residents will decide --

MS. WINFIELD: No, just informing them,
because every time there's something about Prairie
Crossing going on, because it's been in the newsletter,
but just because they know it, they are going to be
asking questions.

MR. MORRISROE: Lots 1 and 6, and a
portion, little bit of 2 and 7, where the church is,
where the church has been for many years, and then the
others are going back with trees and stuff, and the
Little League overflow with practice there. I think

1 probably it means more to the hospital's parking than it
2 does to the Little League parking. I assume it may mean
3 there may not be parking on the east side of the street,
4 the people that live along there would have the right to
5 their front lawn and their curb and the interest in
6 their home.

7 On the other hand, looking on the
8 other side of Guadeloupe Homes, there is days when Block
9 Junior High has events and every house, other than the
10 drive-ins, are filled with people coming to Block Junior
11 High.

12 MS. WINFIELD: They're already familiar
13 with that, this is something totally new

14 MR. MORRISROE: I'm just saying, similar
15 area when it comes to that.

16 MS. WINFIELD: Have those lots been sold
17 already?

18 MR. ALLEN: No.

19 MR. MORRISROE: We wish they were sold.
20 We'd love if it was sold. We'd love if people were
21 proposing buildings. We are praying for this, that this
22 works, that they get sold and/or developers put up a
23 couple of models; that still is to be decided. Whether
24 it's simply lots sold and everyone builds their own
25 home, or whether you have the problem of people buying
properties and they want to put a manufactured home
there. And Indiana law allows them to do that as long
as it is connected and has a driveway and utilities, and
everything else.

MS. WINFIELD: When this comes in front
of anyone, could you please stress that those lots have
not been claimed or sold, because that's what is going
around. That's why I'm asking you to please put that --
make that statement so people will be aware.

MR. MORRISROE: Very good.

MR. GOMEZ: We are getting a lot of phone
calls from people inquiring about the lots.

MR. MORRISROE: Wanting to buy or simply
--

1 MR. GOMEZ: Actually wanting to buy them.

2 MR. MORRISROE: Okay. Any other
3 questions?

4 MR. ALLEN: No matter what, even if they
5 do the lots, they still have NIPSCO utilities running
6 them and need to be relocated. This is the first step
7 to establishing that, relocating of the existing
8 utilities that don't belong in the City, but will
9 service the homes to be built down there. That's all
10 that I have.

11 MR. MORRISROE: Any other questions?

12 MR. GOMEZ: So we are just seeking
13 approval of the final plat then?

14 MR. MORRISROE: Yes, and this would then
15 be recorded in Crown Point. I think you have a matter
16 of different pens and whatever, so we do that in the
17 format that the County requires. Is that set, Debbra?

18 MS. GRITTERS: Yes, tomorrow morning.

19 MR. GOMEZ: We can pass this and still
20 address Stacy's concerns?

21 MR. MORRISROE: I think it's a matter of
22 how we do that, whether the Mayor's office releases a
23 press release for that information or whether we do a
24 newsletter. It could certainly be part of one of his
25 monthly newsletters

MR. GOMEZ: Well, how far off are we from
beginning this project? We looking at over a year yet
or something?

MR. ALLEN: The time technically starts
for the utilities being relocated, once we finalize the
plat, that's what NIPSCO needs to get the ball rolling.
And, so, again, we are not like approving which
structures get built out here. We are just really
establishing the easement so that NIPSCO can relocate
the utilities out of the way for something to be built
that way.

MR. GOMEZ: It's marked preliminary
utilities.

1 MR. ALLEN: Correct, on the engineering
2 side.

3 MR. MORRISROE: The sale of the homes
4 would probably be set at an appraised price or auction.
5 Has that been decided yet?

6 MR. ALLEN: Not that I'm aware of.

7 MR. MORRISROE: Or whether a developer
8 will put up a couple of homes and maybe have the option
9 to resell them.

10 MS. WINFIELD: With the utilities being
11 moved, is there any interruption with the residents for
12 that?

13 MR. ALLEN: So, no, this is all going to
14 occur with the City. For example, you have got -- I
15 believe Acting Chief of Police, he's currently located
16 in Lots 18 and 19. Our project shouldn't effect him in
17 any way. He did relocate his fence, but it was outside
18 of what we were doing. His fence was actually not on
19 his property, so that was corrected. So that's the only
20 thing that you will see happening outside of our project
21 limits.

22 MR. MORRISROE: Will, are you aware it's
23 been decided this will be bid through auction?

24 MR. ALLEN: No, I am not aware.

25 MR. MORRISROE: I think that's still to
be decided. Currently there has been some consideration
to have them appraised and then to have people bid on
them, and that would be through a public meeting. And
that assumes that each individual would build their own
home rather than perhaps a developer develop 2 or 3
homes.

MR. ALLEN: We would then, I guess,
create standards, or almost like a rubric of developers,
whoever owns these properties, if we auction them off,
to follow when they are building their homes or are they
going -- I guess that's to be decided, right?

MR. MORRISROE: Well, Prairie Park has
really a pretty broad range of homes from where Dr.

1 There were mansions in this area and then there are some
2 very simple homes on hills. When you go in the back,
3 for instance, they were pretty simple homes. They try
4 to have a broad scope as later with the Guadeloupe
5 homes. They had homes at 24,000 up to 36,000 as far as
6 the basic and they were tied to the lot. A larger lot
7 was expected to have a larger home. Smaller lot could
8 have a smaller home. And there are still some of the
9 homes, as a result of those subdivisions, have had a
10 variety of occupants, even though parts of Prairie Park,
11 towards the north of Prairie Park that are pretty
12 classy, expensive homes, in contrast to some other ones
13 that were in the south of Prairie Park.

14 MS. WINFIELD: The lot where Dr. Parker's
15 home was at.

16 MR. MORRISROE: That's not being looked
17 at, whether that becomes a home again, that's to be
18 seen. The water service was apparently a horrendous
19 bill and sewers, and that's really the problem. The
20 person who had hoped to rehab it, that was the cause of
21 why things happened.

22 Now, they had trucks out there for
23 at least a week, two weeks, trying to deal with that
24 water service and sanitary, 3, 6 months ago and I don't
25 know whether it's now, you know, whether it would be
safe to build again, or whether it still would have some
of the problems. That was a beautiful home, but it had
very serious structural problems, especially water and
sewer.

MR. GOMEZ: Any further questions or
comments? (None) There being no further questions or
comments, I will entertain a motion for approval of the
final plat for Prairie Crossing.

MS. WINFIELD: I make a motion.

MR. ALLEN: Second.

MR. GOMEZ: Roll call.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None
Opposed: None

MR. GOMEZ: Motion carries.

That concludes new business. We

will move on to old business. We have no old business

1 before us.

2 Are there any further comments from
the Commissioners? (None)

3 Any comments from the Public?
(None)

4 Our next meeting will be Thursday,
September 8th, at 4:30 p.m.. That concludes all items
5 on the agenda tonight. I'd entertain a motion for
adjournment.

6 MR. ALLEN: So moved.

7 MS. RAMOS: Second.

8 MR. GOMEZ: Roll call.

9 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None
Opposed: None

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11 MR. GOMEZ: Motion carries. Meeting
adjourned.

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13 *** Meeting adjourned ***

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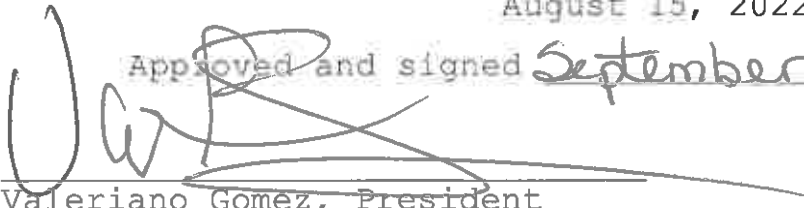
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August 15, 2022

Approved and signed September 6, 2022



Valeriano Gomez, President



William Allen, Vice-President

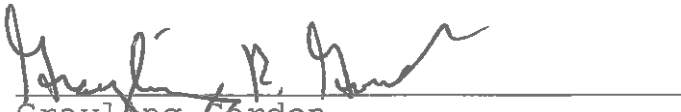
Lilia Ramos, Secretary

Joanne Moricz, Commissioner

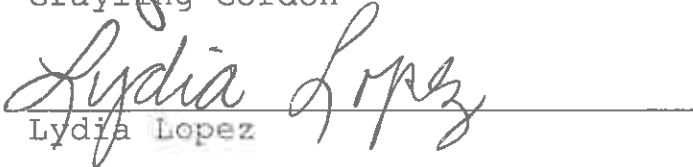


Chanthini Fowler

Douglas Sloss



Grayling Gordon



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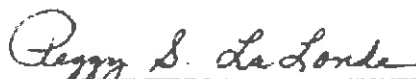


Debra Gritters, Planning Manager

1 I, Peggy S. LaLonde, a competent and duly
2 qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did
3 report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings
4 and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and
5 place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my
6 personal direction.

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

11 Dated at Munster, Indiana, this 18th
12 of August, 2022.

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15 Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR
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