

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
PLAN COMMISSION

BOARD MEMBERS

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

Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 6, 2020 @ 4:30 p.m.
Reported for Fissinger & Associates
By: Lisa Pena

CALL TO ORDER: 4:30 p.m.

Roll Call: Present: Val Gomez, Anthony Serna, Lilia Ramos,
Douglas Sloss, William Allen, Stacy Winfield.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Meeting of Monday, March 16, 2020

Comments/Questions: None

Motion to approve March 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes made by
Lilia Ramos. Second by Douglass Sloss.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": Val Gomez, Anthony Serna, Lila
Ramos, Douglass Sloss, William Allen Abstain: Stacy
Winfield Opposed: None Motion Carries.

NEW BUSINESS:

CITY PLANNER'S REPORT:

MR. GOMEZ: We'll move on to New Business. Under City
Planner's Report we have Resolution 01-2020, Resolution of
the East Chicago Advisory Plan Commission initiating a
proposal to change the Zoning Map of the City concerning the
former West Calumet East Chicago Housing Site and Goodman
Park.

1 MR. MORRISROE: Good afternoon. I can't exactly talk in
2 circles. At least not for the full meeting. So I will
3 simply stay here. And I want you to know that you're part of
4 the family as we go forward.

5 This concerns the what is popularly known as Super
6 Fund Site or Super Fund Zone 1 formerly known as the West
7 Calumet Housing Project.

8 You have a small map. The official document that
9 you received has the Resolution which is two pages and then
10 has a map which is attached to that. And then attached to
11 that is the proposed Ordinance for the Common Council
12 entitled Sponsor Councilman Terrance Hill Ordinance Number.
13 And there's not a number yet. That's put in by the Clerk of
14 the Common Council. And then the last page which is also
15 stapled to the package is the Notice of Public Hearing.

16 That Notice appeared in the Hammond Times this last
17 Friday. And the Notice is about the meeting two weeks from
18 today which we're going to discuss and which our President
19 has some questions about and which hopefully we'll all have
20 input into.

21 This area has been zoned R4 for most of where the
22 housing was and R2 for where the Goodman Park was and the
23 swimming pool formerly which has been removed. And this is
24 being asked to consider that this be rezoned as M1 which is
25 light industry.

There has been some consideration of a warehouse
being there and also a training facility as well as some
offices that are to be part of that. And so before any of
that can be done or considered or come before Tech Review or
come before yourselves the zoning has to be addressed first.

Now, the Zoning Map that you have is a little bit
hard to read. I have a larger Zoning Map if we could just
pass it around.

MS. WINFIELD: Does everybody have gloves on? You're
passing a paper around.

MR. SERNA: I can see mine.

MR. MORRISROE: If you can see yours, fine. You may
want to just look at the larger one on your way out the door
then.

1 The question of whether the area remain housing or
2 become an industrial use such as a warehouse is something
3 that has long been considered. There are those in the
4 Community who want it to be residential again. There are
5 those who want it not necessarily to become residential, but
6 to be treated by the EPA, that it be dug to a distance of 2
7 or 3 feet in order to be at least in their eyes a safer
8 Community.

9 The difference between the industrial zoning and
10 the residential zoning is that the clearing of the ground
11 would be I believe to an 18 inch depth.

12 Joe, perhaps you know. Is it 18 inch or 2 feet?

13 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Not yet been determined.

14 MR. MORRISROE: Not yet been determined. Depending upon
15 what goes in there.

16 So this is what is being presented for you.
17 The numbers on the first page refer to the zoning parcels.
18 It's a little bit hard to read the numbers.

19 There's one principal parcel for all of the
20 housing. And then there's a housing for the park where the
21 yellow is. And you'll notice along the right side there's
22 some red and then blue. And these are the zoning. So about
23 six or seven of the numbers that are on here refer not to the
24 main area where the housing was, but the smaller parcels that
25 were alongside of it.

 So you have then the map, the Resolution that will
be presented to the Council as a result of your vote. And
that vote will be two weeks from now after the Public
Hearing.

 The Public Hearing as I said appeared this last
Friday and gave Notice of the Public Hearing which will be at
the beginning of your meeting on the 20th of April, two weeks
from this afternoon.

 Are there any questions?

 MR. GOMEZ: So this Resolution 01-2020 is just
initiating the proposal then?

 MR. MORRISROE: That is correct.

1 MR. GOMEZ: So this has to go to the Public Hearing. We
2 take people's comments. And then it goes to the Council.

3 It needs Council approval too before it's --

4 MR. MORRISROE: Well, it needs your approval after the
5 Public Hearing as I understand it. Joe could speak to this.

6 MR. ALLEGRETTI: It's a two step process. The Ordinance
7 amending the Zoning Map which is what determines the
8 permitted uses and variance zones within the City is a two
9 step process.

10 It originates in the Plan Commission which is what
11 you're doing today. This is the initial Resolution. We're
12 required to advertise for a Public Hearing and give notice to
13 interested parties as defined by Statute and give them an
14 opportunity to speak about it.

15 After the Public Hearing there's a recommendation,
16 a final resolution forwarding the subject matter to the
17 Common Council for consideration.

18 The rezoning if it occurs that is in the form of
19 amending the Zoning Map changing the permitted use of the
20 subject property is a legislative function. We're the party
21 that has the Public Hearing. And we initiate the process by
22 forwarding a proposed Ordinance to the Common Council.

23 MR. GOMEZ: So the Council has final the say?

24 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Yes, sir.

25 MR. GOMEZ: Are there any other questions or comments on
Resolution 01-2020?

MS. WINFIELD: Yes. I see you have these parcels down.
But I think it's kind of best if we go on the Assessor's to
look at this so you can see the actual property. Am I
correct, Mr. Morrisroe, because the parcels are down here.
But you have people that are not here today. And I see you
have the larger map. But I think you can go on the
Assessor's site as a guest.

MR. MORRISROE: All of these are from the Assessor's
Map.

MS. WINFIELD: I mean as far as you can see a visual
there on the Assessor's Website if you go and look at the

1 parcels. You can see the properties even clearer. You see
2 the actual properties. I know you have the one map.

3 MR. MORRISROE: The Assessor as I understand it does not
4 have a map.

5 MS. WINFIELD: They have the property that you can look
6 at.

7 MR. MORRISROE: If you chose to focus in further, those
8 are all on the Surveyor's Map. And so you can focus in as
9 much as you want. We can do that. But I don't know that we
10 would print all of those.

11 MS. WINFIELD: No. No. I'm just saying from my home
12 because me working in the Building Department I know I can go
13 on here and put this parcel in and look at the picture of the
14 property on it. If I want to go on the Assessor's site, I
15 can see the property from this parcel number.

16 MR. ALLEGRETTI: That's exactly right, counsel.

17 MS. WINFIELD: You can go on as a guest. You don't have
18 to have the code. You can go on as a guest.

19 MR. GOMEZ: Mr. Morrisroe, the Notice that was put out
20 for this meeting had all this information on it?

21 MR. MORRISROE: It had it by number. It has the numbers
22 of the parcels. If you look on the left-hand side of the
23 Resolution as it was given to you, it has a number of
24 parcels. They're all East Chicago. They're all in that
25 area.

And the principal parcel is 101004 which is the
fifth one down. I'm sorry. 001. It seems to me as I read
the map has the entire parcel. All of that is in pink on
your map.

Then all these other pieces like for instance I
know there was a garage facility along here. And then there
is an empty property. A lot of that is utility quarter for
NIPSCO which however is owned -- NIPSCO has an easement, but
the ownership has been by the Housing Authority.

MS. WINFIELD: The only reason I was saying is because
if you're having the public go on it, they're looking at your
article in the paper and they're looking at parcels. They
don't understand what they're reading if it's not explained.

1 And if it's people's property that's involved in this, you
2 may have a property that someone got the forgiveness and
they're working on.

3 You don't want to bump heads with that with these
4 parcels because I do know of a property that someone had got
a permit to start work on. So I have a concern.

5 MR. MORRISROE: One of these properties?

6 MS. WINFIELD: If this came from Councilman Hill, I do
7 know that there is a property on here. So there's a concern.
That's why I was suggesting we go on the Assessor's. I would
8 tell people to go on the Assessor's to look.

9 And with this epidemic that's going on people are
not going to come here to a hearing to listen to a hearing.
10 Everybody may not have access to a computer to watch it. I
don't know if it's going to go on Channel 21. I always think
11 about people maybe not having Channel 21.

12 This is a hard time to get information out to
people that might want to come because the residents in the
13 Calumet area have a concern and a say. And they have always
felt that they were left out when things have happened over
there.

14 MR. MORRISROE: This is not involving any of their
15 homes.

16 MS. WINFIELD: But this is West Calumet, right?

17 MR. MORRISROE: Yes.

18 MS. WINFIELD: That they knocked down?

19 MR. MORRISROE: That they knocked down west of McCook.

20 MS. WINFIELD: Right. The people still have a great
concern because they had to vacate the area. So you still
21 have people that's concerned about what's going on there.

22 MR. MORRISROE: Are you recommending that we create --

23 MS. WINFIELD: I mean with the situation that we're in
now how are you really going to get the information to the
24 people?

25 And I know you said within two weeks you need to

1 have it. But if something has to go out to the residents so
2 they know, however we're going to conduct the meeting, if
3 it's going to be on Zoom or whatever, the residents need to
4 be able to see or hear what's really going on because once
5 this happens whether the Council passes it or whichever
6 happens there's still going to be a question because people
7 cannot attend and cannot question anything.

8 MR. GOMEZ: The people in the area are they being mailed
9 notices?

10 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Yes.

11 MR. GOMEZ: So everybody in the adjoining areas they're
12 getting a notice?

13 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Everyone within two properties deep of
14 the subject property is getting a First Class Mail notice
15 copy of the Public Notice that's being published in the
16 newspaper.

17 MR. MORRISROE: And those were mailed I believe on
18 Friday. April 1.

19 MR. GOMEZ: So at the Public Hearing can we have
20 enlarged --

21 MR. ALLEGRETTI: The letters went out a little
22 prematurely.

23 MR. GOMEZ: Mr. Morrisroe, at the Public Hearing can we
24 have enlarged photos that have this plot?

25 MR. MORRISROE: We can have this very large. We can
prepare that ourselves and with Joe and with Ryan.

MR. ALLEGRETTI: I believe the potential developer, the
rezoning petitioner will bring large pictures of the site and
the proposed development.

MR. GOMEZ: We have the mailings going out. We have the
Notice. And if we have the developer bring these bigger
photos so when people come and speak, they could actually see
what we have. I think that would suffice.

We're only voting initiating the Resolution right
now. Next meeting we'll vote on it after everybody talks and
whatever. And the Council has the final say anyway.

1 MS. WINFIELD: If this is not cleared up, that's my
2 thing, if this situation, if our situation is not cleared up,
3 how are you going to have the people coming to a hearing?
4 People are afraid to go outside now. So how are you going to
5 actually have the people participate in the hearing?

6 MR. GOMEZ: Well, right now, not only just for this
7 meeting, we're discussing now following the Governor's
8 Executive Orders on Meetings how we would limit people.

9 We're thinking of ways to space out now and
10 actually putting chairs in the hallway, this hallway and the
11 downstairs hallway. Security will limit them as they come
12 in. As people finish speaking they would go out.

13 So I think by then we should have a better plan.
14 But right now we have the Notice for Hearing already in the
15 mail. We have the letters already mailed out. So I think we
16 have to proceed and try to make the best of it, if we get
17 these larger drawings out and if we have to explain it to the
18 people when they come.

19 MS. WINFIELD: Pastor Sloss, do you think your members
20 would come here for a hearing? I don't think so. You have a
21 lot of elders that are afraid to come. You can space them
22 out as far as you want.

23 Right now and the President just said these two
24 weeks are going to be the most serious critical times.
25 People are going to be so terrified. My thing is do you
think that they'll come?

MR. SLOSS: No. A lot of seniors are not going to come.
That's a given. There's no way around it.

MR. GOMEZ: Well, I don't know. These are difficult
times. And like I said with the mailings already out, the
Notice already put out, I think we just have to make the best
of what we can. And, Stacy, I think the Council has the
final say.

MS. WINFIELD: We're going to be doing it
electronically, the meetings electronically. So we're not
going to even have people come in. The President comes in.
Maybe the secretary will come in. But we're going to be
doing it electronically. So we won't be here. I don't know
how they're going to do it with the public.

MR. GOMEZ: That's the thing. Even with your meetings

1 from what I hear they still have to figure out how to have
2 the public address it.

3 MS. WINFIELD: I don't believe they're going to be able
4 to.

5 MR. GOMEZ: There's people talking about the Zoom thing
6 or whatever. I know with our IT we're discussing that to
7 figure out how that works. I'm not familiar with it.

8 MS. WINFIELD: The School City is having their School
9 Board Meeting today. Maybe if we find out how it's going
10 today where the public is going to be able -- hopefully if
11 they're able to call in some type of way. I don't know if
12 that would be something Ryan would set up.

13 MR. LOMAX: It's already been set up. The giant screen
14 in the Mayor's Office is also what we were thinking about
15 using for Zoom and stuff like that. So the people that have
16 computer access we can wheel it in and they can call in from
17 there.

18 MR. GOMEZ: Can we do this here with this system?

19 MR. LOMAX: Yes. Because it's wireless. All you would
20 have to do is just use the wireless internet connection here.

21 MS. RAMOS: For the BZA meetings, Mr. Morrisroe, we
22 actually had the residents that had a concern for the Public
23 Hearing call. We called them. We called all the residents
24 within that area. And if they had any concerns at that
25 point, we would document their concerns and then read them at
the meeting.

So for those that don't have computer access maybe
that's another way that they can voice their opinion.

At that last BZA meeting, Mr. Morrisroe, remember
we had Belinda read their comments.

MR. MORRISROE: However I believe it only one or two.

MS. RAMOS: We had a few. We had quite a few that did
voice a concern. So that's just another avenue that maybe
they can use.

Maybe they can call and then give their name,
address and voice concerns. And then we can also read those
concerns at the Public Hearing because like Stacy said not

1 everybody is going to have access to the internet and be able
2 to patch into Zoom. That's just a thought.

3 I know the seniors are going to be afraid to come
4 out. So at least they can have their voice heard.

5 MR. SLOSS: Some of us juniors don't want to be here.

6 MR. GOMEZ: Are there any other questions or comments?

7 Comments/Questions: None.

8 Motion to approve Resolution 01-2020 made by Anthony Serna.
9 Second by William Allen.

10 Roll Call: "All in Favor": Val Gomez, Anthony Serna, Lila
11 Ramos, Douglass Sloss, William Allen Abstain: Stacy
12 Winfield Opposed: None Motion Carries.

13 MR. GOMEZ: So pursuant to the Resolution and as
14 Mr. Morrisroe said the Notice has been sent out for the
15 Public Hearing scheduled on Monday, April 20, 2020 at 4:30
16 p.m. So that will be before our next meeting. Hopefully
17 we'll get together with IT and I think our Engineer had some
18 ideas about this Zoom.

19 William, you had some ideas about this too?

20 MR. ALLEN: Yeah. It could work.

21 MR. GOMEZ: Well, we're going to make an effort to try
22 to make it work until then.

23 OLD BUSINESS:

24 MR. GOMEZ: One thing I want to bring up and I think it
25 was brought up before. Under the conditions that we're
working under the Governor's Directive the meetings should be
essential matters.

So my idea was usually when we have meetings every
other meeting we have nothing on the agenda. I was going to
propose these meetings where there's nothing on the agenda we
just don't have meetings until we figure it out.

As a matter of fact the Governor even had a
suggestion in his Directive that one member could be present.
The other members can be on your phone. I kind of like that
idea. And we can even let the public know about that.

1 So if everybody is okay with that, I'm going to
2 pursue getting our Plan Commission -- because we're unique.
3 We have some many members and then with the staff as you can
4 see how we have to sit. I'd like to work on this. I'd like
5 your permission to work on this with IT and also with our
6 Multimedia so we can set this up for the next meetings.

7 MS. WINFIELD: Ryan, they may just put something for
8 Redevelopment, their meeting. And they gave for the
9 conference call they gave the telephone number and a code.

10 MR. LOMAX: They're going to do the same thing that I
11 talked about earlier with the Mayor's Office. We will wheel
12 it in during business hours. And they would call in through
13 Zoom or Skype or whatever program that's on the tablet.

14 MS. WINFIELD: The residents can also, right?

15 MR. LOMAX: Yes. The residents can also.

16 MR. GOMEZ: Is it possible to stream it live on Channel
17 21 and then they can phone it?

18 MR. LOMAX: It is possible, yes. On that giant screen,
19 yes, because it does have a webcam. We would just have to
20 log into the Facebook account.

21 MR. GOMEZ: But I mean from here?

22 MR. LOMAX: From here?

23 MR. GOMEZ: Yeah.

24 MR. LOMAX: On that thing, yes.

25 MR. GOMEZ: You can just roll that thing in?

MR. LOMAX: Yeah. We can roll it in. And then we can
connect to Facebook. It's a giant computer. That's
literally what it is.

MR. GOMEZ: Well, that's if they let us borrow it?

MR. LOMAX: They will. They will because I believe --
I'm not sure. But I believe Steven Sanders talked about it
or whatever.

They said like that's probably one of the number
one reasons or usages of that is bring it in here because he

1 was telling me about using that for the Public Hearings for
2 all the meetings that are happening for the rest of the month
here.

3 MR. GOMEZ: So it's okay with the rest of the Board? I
4 have your permission to pursue these different avenues for
our next meetings?

5 MS. RAMOS: Yes.

6 MR. SLOSS: Yes.

7 MR. ALLEN: That's fine.

8 MR. SERNA: Yes.

9 MR. GOMEZ: I'll just take a voice vote. Seems like the
10 majority. So I'll pursue that with IT and Multimedia.

11 Are there any other comments from the
Commissioners?

12 MR. SLOSS: I have a question. With that said with
13 this next meeting coming so close when will we kind of be
notified?

14 MR. GOMEZ: As soon as we find out I'll have Belinda
15 call you guys. I mean not Belinda. I keep thinking of
Belinda. Courtnee, my apologies.

16 I think within this week I might get something from
17 IT. And judging from here they're already talking about it
at the Mayor's Office. So we should get something pretty
18 quick. So then Courtnee will contact everybody and let you
know.

19 MR. LOMAX: We'll let everybody know.

20 MR. GOMEZ: I kind of like the idea of having the
21 President and everybody could see it and everybody can phone
in and everybody can vote like that. That's actually what
22 the State is kind of recommending.

23 Any further questions or comments?

24 PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

25 * Next Regular Meeting Date: Monday, April 20,
2020 @ 4:30 p.m.

1 Motion to adjourn was made by Lilia Ramos. Second by William
Allen.

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

4 * Meeting ended at 4:58 p.m.

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Approval of Meeting Minutes of
Monday, April 6, 2020

Approved and Signed April 10, 2020



Val Gomez, President



Anthony Serna, Vice President

Lilia Ramos, Secretary

Monique Kurmis, Commissioner

Joanne Moricz, Commissioner

Stacy Winfield, Commissioner

Douglass Sloss, Commissioner



William Allen, Commissioner

Lydia Lopez, Commissioner

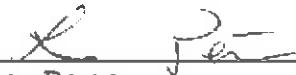
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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 14th day of April, 2020.



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



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