

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO  
PLAN COMMISSION

BOARD MEMBERS

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

Regular Meeting Minutes  
Monday, February 6, 2023 @ 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, Lilia Ramos,  
Joanne Moricz, Douglas Sloss Grayling Gordon,  
Stacy Winfield

Present on Zoom: William Allen

MR. GOMEZ: We do have a quorum.

STAFF: Present in Chambers: Richard Morrisroe, Acting  
City Planner  
Debra Gritters, City  
Planner Associate  
Alysia Dunbar, Recording  
Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: January 20, 2023

1 Questions/Comments: None.

2 Motion to approve January 20, 2023 Meeting Minutes made by  
3 Lilia Ramos. Second by Stacy Winfield.

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

6 NEW BUSINESS:

7 MR. GOMEZ: We have two items under the City Planner's  
8 Report. We have the Levin Building Interior Renovation and  
9 Facade Improvements and the Prairie Crossings Subdivision  
10 Final Plat.

11 MS. GRITTERS: So we have the Levin Building today.  
12 It's a project that we're just looking at the use of the  
13 property as a development. And we have Tracy here to give a  
14 little impromptu short presentation.

15 MR. GILLIS: Good evening. Right we have the existing  
16 building. And the exterior, this is the plan for the  
17 exterior to renovate and to revitalize the existing  
18 terra-cotta.

19 Right now there's stucco over the front entrance.  
20 We're going to tear that off. We plan to tear that off and  
21 add terra-cotta and new glass front.

22 The only thing with the exterior of the building  
23 that won't change is the main entrance going into the  
24 building. The existing door that is 95 years old is going to  
25 be restored.

(Commissioner Lydia Lopez joined the meeting)

MR. GILLIS: And all of the grass trimmings on the  
exterior of the corridor is going to remain intact.

The building was built 1928. So it's roughly 95  
years old. It's roughly 17,000 square feet.

This is an important item in the City because it's  
one of our last buildings left. And the building is  
structurally sound. It's built like a bomb shelter.

Actually all the steel that's in the building was  
made at Inland Steel. So the building is steel and concrete.

1           The scope of work would be to restore the main  
2 street all the way around the building or the front, replace  
3 all exiting windows.

4           And the new windows will be windows to match, but  
5 more efficiently. Double pane glass because the windows go  
6 from ceiling to floor. And put French rails on the front so  
7 kids can't jump out the window.

8           And you see on the side we're going to put  
9 balconies. But each unit is a full condo. We're going to  
10 put balconies in each unit. And the fire escape is going to  
11 be relocated from the rear to the side here between  
12 Fitzsimmons and the Levin.

13           And this here is the event space. This main court,  
14 this will be maintained just the way it is just the doors  
15 refurbished. And this is the event space.

16           My intention is to have the interior of the  
17 building extremely modern even to the heating system.  
18 Instead of forced air have radiated heat German made systems  
19 where they're more efficient. And anyone buying the unit  
20 would have less cost to maintain.

21           And this is the hallways. These are the common  
22 areas where individuals will pass through to get to their  
23 respective units.

24           With flooring we're going to keep the existing wood  
25 flooring. The flooring there is in good condition. So we're  
going to keep that refurbish it and clad some of the walls  
with wood framing accent walls.

          These are the interior of the units. And this is  
the radiating heat in the bedrooms.

          This is 3 feet balconies. From the third floor you  
can actually see all the way to the water.

          And we're kind of throwing around maybe a rooftop  
garden area because the elevator goes to the roof.

          That's it. Any questions?

MR. GOMEZ: Any questions or comments?

MR. SLOSS: I have a question, Mr. President.  
Approximately what is the square footage of the unit?

1 MR. GILLIS: The units, the average is about 14,000  
2 square feet. I am maximizing all that space. So it's a big  
unit.

3 MR. SLOSS: 1,400 square feet?

4 MR. GILLIS: Yeah. 1,400.

5 MR. SLOSS: Thank you.

6 MR. GOMEZ: Stacy.

7 MS. WINFIELD: My concern is you're doing all this with  
8 no parking garage.

9 MR. GILLIS: I can't speak to the parking. My part is  
just to get approval.

10 I do know that the alley is partially vacated. It  
11 can be completely vacated.

12 I can't really speak to that part of the parking  
13 issue.

14 Like anything else people live downtown and they  
15 find parking because we have to do something.

16 MS. WINFIELD: I was born and raised in the Harbor.

17 MR. GILLIS: Me too.

18 MS. WINFIELD: I know you don't have anything to do with  
19 that. But that's a question that I would ask. That's a  
20 concern.

21 MR. GILLIS: Okay.

22 MR. GOMEZ: Is there any space behind that building like  
23 Fitzsimmons where you can create parking or does that go all  
24 the way back?

25 MR. GILLIS: It goes all the way back to the alley.

MR. GOMEZ: So there is no space?

MR. GILLIS: There is no space. But there's always a  
24 way. I don't want us to be held prisoner to obstacles.

25 If there's an obstacle, we just work around it. We

1 don't stop just because you can't do nothing. We can always  
2 do something.

3 If we don't do it, who else? So we have to work  
4 around that.

5 MR. GOMEZ: Right now is the inside gutted completely?

6 MR. GILLIS: Yes. The inside is intact.

7 MR. GOMEZ: It's completed gutted. So you can actually  
8 start working on that?

9 MR. GILLIS: Yes. And the basement is completely dry.  
10 It's clean. We're going to turn the basement into storage  
11 for the tenants.

12 The elevator goes all the way down. It makes  
13 sense. So if you live there, you have somewhere to put your  
14 stuff. We all carry stuff.

15 MR. GOMEZ: We're going to have to install a new modern  
16 elevator then?

17 MR. GILLIS: Yes. There's one up there now that will be  
18 taken out and a new elevator. And an elevator that only the  
19 tenants can access.

20 MR. GOMEZ: And you said the elevator actually goes to  
21 the roof?

22 MR. GILLIS: Yes. It's a penthouse.

23 MR. GOMEZ: So if everything goes, what's kind of the  
24 time for completion of this project? Is it several years?

25 MR. GILLIS: No. No. We're not looking at that, no.  
Definitely not.

When everything is in place, all the administrative  
issues are in place because the building is ready, it's  
projected say 18 months.

That's the schedule I have planned out. And if the  
schedule is followed, it can get done in 18 months.

MR. GOMEZ: Were there any water issues in the basement  
here like the PNC Bank?

1 MR. GILLIS: There was. Like PNC, that's done with.  
2 The basement is dry. You can walk the basement.

3 MS. RAMOS: I have a question please. So is the  
4 building actually owned by the City?

5 MR. GILLIS: Yes.

6 MS. RAMOS: And you are Tracy with the Engineering  
7 Department?

8 MR. GILLIS: Well, I'm a consultant for the City. I'm  
9 development.

10 MS. RAMOS: You're the construction?

11 MR. GILLIS: Yes.

12 MR. GOMEZ: So right now we're in the construction end  
13 of it. Are there any bids?

14 MR. GILLIS: Yes.

15 MR. GOMEZ: Everything is out?

16 MR. GILLIS: Everything out, yes.

17 MR. GOMEZ: Right now we're just at the beginning  
18 stages?

19 MR. GILLIS: Yes.

20 MR. GOMEZ: Is there a motion required or is it just a  
21 presentation for information?

22 MS. GRITTERS: Presentation, square footage of each  
23 unit.

24 MR. GILLIS: So we can move forward.

25 MS. GRITTERS: So you're looking at facade and  
construction release, design release from the State. Then he  
will be able to start going.

MR. GOMEZ: So everything is submitted to the State and  
now we're waiting for approval?

MR. GILLIS: Yes.

1 MS. GRITTERS: Pending, yes.

2 MR. GOMEZ: Is there anything you need of this Board  
today?

3 MS. GRITTERS: To approve.

4 MR. GOMEZ: The plan?

5 MS. GRITTERS: The use of it.

6 MR. GOMEZ: Any other questions or comments?

7 Questions/Comments: None.

8 Motion to approve Levin Building Interior Renovation and  
9 Facade Improvements Plan made by Douglas Sloss. Second by  
Grayling Gordon.

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

12 MR. GOMEZ: Thank you.

13 MR. GILLIS: You're welcome.

14 MR. GOMEZ: Next we have Prairie Crossings Subdivision  
the Final Plat.

15 MS. GRITTERS: Yes. We approved the plat. This is the  
16 final revision. It appears that NIPSCO wanted an extra foot  
17 added to the easement. So that's really the end result of  
this final plat.

18 MR. ALLEN: The Engineering Department has continued  
19 conversations with NIPSCO.

20 So again like Miss Gritters stated just previously  
we had an original plat come before the Planning Commission  
that got approved. We had continued conversations. And it  
21 was decided that NIPSCO needed more room in order to relocate  
their electrical alongside the west side of Elm Street south  
22 of the intersection of 144th and Elm.

23 And so it's agreed I believe 21 feet of easement  
for the utilities on the west side. And then on the east  
24 side 15 feet for the gas to be relocated as well.

25 It will create a loop. That's something that

1 NIPSCO wanted done to prepare all the land in that area for  
2 future housing.

3 And then whatever they're doing for this project  
4 will tie into the second phase which is still being  
5 conceptualized which will be south of where you see on the  
6 survey at the bottom of Elm Street from Elm Street to Alder  
7 Street going east and west. So we're going to call that  
8 Phase 2.

9 But right before you today will be for the Phase 1  
10 portion.

11 MR. GOMEZ: Are there any questions of William or  
12 Debbra?

13 Is there any difference between this one and the  
14 one we approved before? Is it NIPSCO issue?

15 MR. ALLEN: Yeah. Minimum changes. Just the additional  
16 one foot alongside the west or technically I guess the east  
17 side of the road. East side of Elm Street.

18 MR. GOMEZ: Any other comments or questions?

19 MR. ALLEN: I guess since I am familiar with the project  
20 and I spoke a little bit about it I will just not vote. Just  
21 abstain for conflict of interest.

22 Questions/Comments: None.

23 Motion to approve Prairie Crossings Subdivision Final Plat  
24 made by Grayling Gordon. Second by Douglas Sloss.

25 Roll Call: "All in Favor": Val Gomez, Lilia Ramos, Joanne  
Moricz, Douglas Sloss, Grayling Gordon, Lydia Lopez, Stacy  
Winfield Abstain: William Allen Opposed: None  
Motion Carries.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

\* Next Regular Meeting Date: Monday, February 20,  
2023 @ 4:30 p.m.



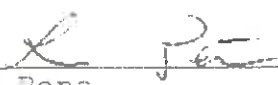


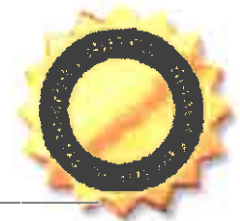
C E R T I F I C A T E

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 17th day of February, 2023.

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



1 Motion to adjourn was made by Stacy Winfield. Second by  
Lilia Ramos.

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

4 \* Meeting ended at 4:46 p.m.

5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

Approval of Meeting Minutes of  
Monday, February 6, 2023  
Approved and Signed \_\_\_\_\_



Val Gomez, President

*Zoom*

Lilia Ramos, Vice-President



William Allen, Secretary



Joanne Moricz, Commissioner



Chanthini Fowler, Commissioner

*Zoom*

Douglas Sloss, Commissioner



Grayling Gordon, Commissioner

Lydia Lopez, Commissioner



Stacy Winfield, Commissioner