

CITY OF OLMOS PARK
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD
FEBRUARY 27, 2014

The Planning and Zoning Commission for the City of Olmos Park, Texas held a meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 27, 2014 at City Hall. Members present were Patricia Meier, George Williams, Sandra Ryan, Ron Michelena, Joseph Johnson, Blair Young and Kenyon McDonald. Administrative staff present was Celia M. DeLeon, City Manager. Also present was City Attorney Steve Pena.

Vice Chairman Patricia Meier called the meeting to order and announced a quorum was present at 5:06 p.m.

The City of Olmos Park Planning & Zoning Commission will conduct a public hearing on Thursday, February 27, 2014 at City Hall 120 West El Prado Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78212-2095 beginning at 5:00 p.m. The public hearing is conducted pursuant to the Code of Ordinances, City of Olmos Park, Texas Chapter 40, Art. VI. § 40-162 to consider an application for a Special Use Permit (SUP) for the following properties currently zoned AD-Apartment District: Lots 3-12 and the west 20.9 feet of Lot 13, Blk. 2 Denverside Addition, West 37 Ft of Lot 8 and Lots 9-12, Blk. 1 Park Place subdivision.

Gene Allen (Wildwood Dr.) – “I understand the position of the developers. They have managed to acquire a large piece of property in Olmos Park and have come up with a plan that will maximize use of that property and which will also maximize the profitability, which is fine, that’s kind of what makes the world go around. At the same time, I believe it is all of our responsibility, you folks in particular (P&Z), to keep in mind that it’s important that we maintain and protect Olmos Park. And how do we do this. I think we do that by recognizing that we’re a tiny municipality and because of that if anything happens on one street or one block it affects the whole city. “....”I think we have to respect our ordinances. Our ordinances were predicated on the belief that Olmos Park needs to be maintained and that there be continuity and there needs to be a compatibility with what we have. set-backs – front, side and rear are important in achieving this. The development of these properties can go forward within the confines of these ordinances. This project violates everything that Olmos Park has represented for 8 decades.” “This is a one-way street towards the developers. There is no plus for Olmos Park”

Dorothy Jo Weiss (W. El Prado Dr). – I’ve lived here since 1951. “Our citizens are not interested in citizens who just move in, construct homes, sell them and move out. After conversations with approximately 40 residents, it is quite obvious that what is wanted in new structures is the possibility of garden homes, ones that we would be proud to have on Olmos Dr. It is not what’s been presented here. I hope the city council and the advisory committees will take these matters into consideration.”

Merribel Parsons – (E. Olmos Drive) “My family has been residents of Olmos Park for 60 years. I grew up here.” She pointed out that across on the north side of Olmos Dr. is being “taken over and converted into single family homes.” “I am here to say that I am involved in renewing architecture in other small towns. In reviewing the documents I find that in deference to our developers, the Stone Oak type of construction are truly not compatible with Olmos Park. It should be noted that we are a very important historic residential area!”

Priestley – (Thelma Dr) - Explained she was concerned about the impact of more cars and managing traffic in this compact area.

Marvin Belasco (E Mandalay) He questioned the process that would follow this P&Z hearing.

Andres Andujar (E Mandalay) “I am interested in the progress of this project because some months ago I and other Olmos park residents who are architects received an invitation by a council member to review PSW plans with them. We expressed a series of concerns with them but unfortunately we had no visible effect on the character of the development. I looked up Special Use Permit in our city codes, Chapter 40, Zoning, Article 6. It made crystal clear to me what is expected of the Zoning Commission. The direction as I read it is to deny this application unless we find the development has no adverse effect or incompatibility with the City of Olmos Park. Regarding adverse impact the code address traffic as one of the points of consideration. This project has an adverse impact on Olmos Park traffic. The impact may be minor but it exists. Let me point out that the street, Olmos Drive is the one and only east / west arterial.”

Next you must consider “if the proposed development contributes to the loss the deterioration, destruction or degradation of the existing neighborhood overall. So my review of this application shows there are at least five reasons that this will impact the neighborhood. First, front yard set-back is request at 30 ft., ours is 40 ft. from the back of the curb. This will have the effect of crowding the right of way, creating a front walk that is unique in a negative way. It does not exist in Olmos Park. It minimizes the front yard potential for tree growing and landscaping for which Olmos Park is famous.”

Another point, “the side set back is requested at 3 ft. as opposed to the city minimum of 6 ft. This will intensely crowd the space between the homes creating the effect of a monotonous monolith. Despite the organization of the front walk that you’ve been presented, it will further evidence the exception to the development as compared to the set- back standards which exist throughout our community. This will be exceptional and it will be crowding the right of way adversely.”

(He went on to discuss the proposed materials, placement of driveways and garages and parking as factors that are not compatible with Olmos Park. He urged that the Commission deny the SUP.)

Whanye Knutson (Mariposa) “First of all I want to compliment PSW for an incredible effort to cram as much life into as much of a small space as possible. The reason I say this, it’s meant to be a compliment, I come from the vantage point of serving in the U.S Service Force of 30 years prior to moving to Olmos Park. I would say what you have proposed here in your construction would look very nice on many military installations which I have served. It is a great utilization of space. It has conformity which is important on a military base installation. But I would say to you gentlemen this is the reason we chose Olmos Park was to get away from uniformity and conformity. If the people who have vision forth community some 70 or 80 years ago were asked to be present at this hearing today what would they say? How would they comment in terms of this vision. I say ‘nice work, wrong place.

Mr. Frank Garza, city attorney - Mrs. Chairman and Board member, I want to address you on behave of the mayor to explain why the mayor and the city council members are not here the evening. As you all know, from here it is recommend and the council will consider the decisions on whatever is recommended tonight. They did not want to be impartial in anyway and make

decision tonight. They would have to review everything themselves to be impartial. The council members who wanted to appear said if they could come if there was no quorum? I said they could but they could not speak. But they couldn't guarantee they wouldn't speak. So, there will also be a public hearing when the city council considers this as well. So, the council will be able to hear the citizens again, if you wish to appear again.

The Planning & Zoning Commission will consider and take action to make its recommendation to the City Council on the application for the Special Use Permit described in Agenda item #2.

Planning & Zoning Commission members' discussion concerning the SUP:

Blair Young – I have concerns about set-backs... right now in Olmos Park the set-backs start at the eaves. I know these houses don't have any eaves the way they're doing it. That concerns me. The reason we have set backs is for fire safety. Nothing in the International Building Code requires our set back. Olmos Park has its set backs on what it wants not the International Building Code.

The alley width – I'm definitely concerned about backing up into the driveway and having two cars passing each other. I haven't been able to prove that two cars can pass each other safely. I don't understand the hardship here. I know they don't have to prove one here but, I think one should have been presented. Why do they have to have it this way?

Sandy Ryan – I have a concern about the integrity of the project. You can go up and down the streets in Olmos Park and there's unity. We have continual 40 foot set-backs (from the curbs), and we have 'x' amount of space between each house. The project has eliminated the set-backs and we have squished the houses up with 6 feet between houses. That's not even a person. It does not follow through with our park like setting. It looks like, on that street, you're in New York or Chicago. I think the simplicity of the design is great but not great for Olmos Park. Putting this on a main street is not going to add to our community. We want to keep the continuity like our founders decided on 80 years ago.

Pat Meier - I want to address density. I understand the concept of 'lesser use' and I understand that going from a multifamily to a single family designation precludes that we could have a 3 story apartment with 179 units. In that sense, it is lesser use. However, I am looking at the density in terms of the footprint and this project has a greater impact on the use of the land. The original statement of purpose and intent in establishing Olmos Park was to insure that "development therein is limited primarily to single family residences, multi-family dwellings, a scattering of small businesses and essential municipal buildings. The very purpose of the city's being is to provide and perpetuate a quiet, tranquil, safe, and orderly community, with abundant greenery, clean air and water, a safe environment, and other amenities conducive to the development and enjoyment of family life." We have sustained this plan by abiding by the framework of our ordinances. An ordinance talks about what you want your city to look like. So we maintain our space and the manner of construction. Thus we've been able to maintain these standards.

The city council in 2012 made a statement in the mission statement:

- *To be charge of development to ensure opportunity for growth, retention of property values and preservation of our rural heritage, with an emphasis on City beautification.*
- *Maintain a vision of the future and plan for services, which support that vision.*

I believe change is good. My feelings are that there needs to be balance between where the old meets the new and that visual space is respected.

Steve Johnson – I want to address distribution and degradation. What are you guys going to do as far as the entry and exit on the alley. It is 7 ½ feet wide. Twenty or more cars additional cars going in and out of there, we already have approximately 12 cars. That means 32 cars plus utility and city vehicles. I know something is going to happen there because change is inevitable, but the quality of the alley right now is on the down swing. There's a lot of bad pavement out there and low spots. I see the alley being a problem; it's a problem not.

Ron Michelena – I would like to touch base on the esthetics. We saw this plan six months ago and I don't believe we have seen a big amount of change in the plan to make it acceptable for the majority of Olmos Park residents. You need to get together and come up with something that everyone can agree somewhat on. Ethically I don't think this fits Olmos Park.

Planning and Zoning Commission members commented on special conditions each would put on the SUP.

Blair Johnson – I would ask they redraw the number of lots they are requesting. That would gain different set-backs on front, side and rear. They are trying to develop too many lots. Also different joint garages that would have to be similar to what they build on Thelma.

George Williams – I would like them to consider garden homes instead of this density. I would like to suggest these homes be 30' wide and 50 ft. deep. They are 145 ft. lots so with 30' X 50' you could create 3000 sq. ft. of living area. Also with each garden home put 6 ft. on the side set back. No parking on Olmos. Parking should be in rear or in front of the property. All lots would have rear entry and a permanent garage.

The alley needs to be improved and the impact of traffic on the town homes considered.

Kenyon McDonald – I don't like the idea of backing out on Olmos Dr. It's too narrow a street. You're going to back out into both lanes and it's a dangerous street, high traffic and people don't go 25 they go 30 or 35.

The neighborhood integrity has to do with building cohesion, coherence and solidarity with the neighborhood. I don't like the looks of them. I think they look less expensive than what is normally built in Olmos Park.

I agree with the concerns about the alley.

Sandy Ryan – I agree with all of your suggestions. I would like to include that I like the ideas of the garden homes and 12 lots. 12 is a reasonable amount. Also, we would like not to see that kind of architecture. What would like in Olmos Park to see more of our unique look, stucco, tile, and all of the other things already mentioned.

Mr. Blair Young moved to deny the Special Use Permit application. Mr. Kenyon McDonald seconded the motion. The vote in favor was unanimous by all Commission members.

There was no other business and the meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

ATTEST:

Patricia Meier
Chair

Celia DeLeon
City Manager