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small things grow,
lack of it makes
great things decay.
— Sallust

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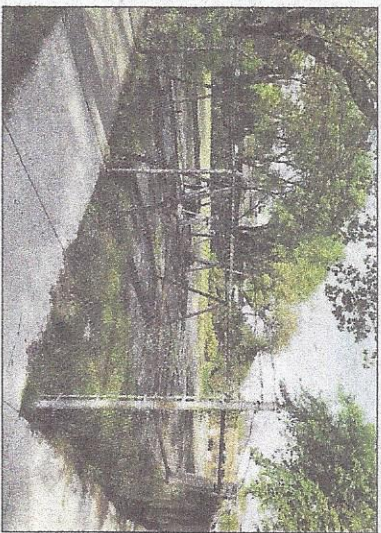
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Property currently used by the Fertile Urban Garden Center in Southwest Lakeview may soon be used for construction of 18 single family homes.

Proposal for 18 single-family homes on vacant Lake View land

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY BILL HADERLEIN

Until the 1980's, the area bounded by Diversey/Paulina/Wellington and Wolcott was the site of some of the largest factories on Chicago's North Side. Lakeview residents lived and worked in their neighborhood.

The Stewart-Warner factory located at 1826 W. Diversey Parkway employed over 8,000 workers at its peak. Now that site is the Landmark Village Townhomes.

Appleton Electric at 1701 W. Wellington moved, along with its 500 jobs to Columbus, NE, in 1986. That site is now a combination of townhomes, Chi Che Wang Park and high-end single-family homes that have been owned over

the years by former Cubs pitcher Carlos Zambrano and Bulls guard Zach Levine.

On May 11, developers presented plans via Zoom to the South Lakeview Neighbors Community Organization for 18 single family homes to be built on the last vacant land available in the area.

The Project was presented by Developer Keith Giles from K Giles LLC, David Haynes, Architect for Pappageorge Haynes Partners and Roland Acosta, attorney with Acosta Ezgur, LLC. The land is located on the northeast corner of Wolfgram and Paulina, just west of the McDonalds on 2834 N. Ashland Ave., and the southeast corner of Wolfgram and Paulina, which is currently occupied by Fertile Urban Garden

Center's holding their landscaping shrubs, trees and plants. The land on the northeast corner is surrounded with a high cyclone fence topped with barbed wire.

Alto Mfg. Co. Inc., located next to McDonald's on Ashland Ave., owns the land. The owner of the garden center is related to the owners of Alto Mfg. Co. Inc. Since the late 1980's, Aldermen representing the South Lakeview Neighbors [SLN] area have forwarded zoning requests to SLN's Neighborhood Development & Review Committee [NDRCL], currently chaired by Sam Samatias, to vet the requests before the alderman decides on the issues. The vacant land is currently

PROPOSAL, see p. 12

Twenty questions, no answers Virtually no public participation allowed at staged meeting insiders hope will result in free real estate

BY PETER VON BUOL

On May 11 about 200 people attended what was described as a community meeting. It turned out to be merely a virtual sales presentation hosted by a Boston-based developer who may be given Lincoln Square's city-owned parking lot at 4715 N. Western to build a five-story mixed-use building contingent upon the developer being granted Low Income Housing Tax Credits to subsidize construction.

The two-hour meeting began with an introduction by Laura Reimers, the 47th Ward chief of staff. "Now, I just want to take a brief moment to talk you through our community-driven zoning process," she said about a plan that was originally hatched in secret, sometime in the summer of 2019, and now, two years later, has still not had a free-flowing open community debate on the very premise of the proposal: turning a critical piece of commercial infrastructure, and other taxpayer assets, over to a private developer so that they may receive funding, then we'd receive an application." The message quickly became clear. TCB and Ald. Martin were selling a narrative that this night's monologue was actually a "community-driven process."

"We actually went ahead and in 2019 provided some preliminary materials that we received, about this potential project," she continued. "I just want to say that, one of the things that we really appreciate working in our community is how engaged and informed and involved people are, especially in our various decision-making processes. So, we definitely expect nothing less tonight," Reimers said. Then only four unscripted questions were taken at the end of the meeting. People were blocked entirely from commenting in the chat box which meant more than 90% of the audience was silenced.

"We know people might have strong opinions about this property. That our community is strong and understanding and listening to folks who have different perspectives," said Reimers of

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PROPOSAL from p. 1

zoned M-1-2 Manufacturing. The immediate area developed over the years is currently zoned RT-4 Residential and the south side of Wolfram is zoned RT-3.

The Developer plans to build 13 single-family homes on the north side of Wolfram under RT-4 zoning which will allow for three-level homes including a finished basement. A private alley will be created behind the houses for garage and car access and refuse pick-up. There will be five single-family homes on the south side of Wolfram on the Fertile site. These would be built under the current RS-3 zoning and would be two-levels with a finished basement. Pappageorge Haymes will provide designs that a potential owner could choose from and then the interiors of the homes would be customized.

Haymes says that the site is a former "clay pit" that has been filled in with dirt. So at this time it has not been determined how much weight the sites could handle, so the homes will either be 100% brick or brick in the front and frame on the sides. Haymes stated the price per house would be over \$1.5 million.

Acosta declared that the project will finish the corner of that neighborhood and blend in with the immediate area and add to the tax rolls.

Samatas provided the findings of SLN's NDRC. He stated that any zoning change granted must be built to the plans presented to the SLN Association. In addition, he noted that this plan had been revised upon the suggestions of the NDRC and fulfilled the NDRC's goal of keeping density down within the Association's boundaries. The NDRC supported the project as presented.

Most of the questions, about 20 to 30, were asked through the Chat Room. It was determined that houses on the north side of Wolfram Ave. would be in the Burley School District and the houses on the south side would be in the Prescott School District. Several of the members stated that Burley and Prescott were either already over-crowded or at full capacity and the additional single-family homes may make the situation worse. The owner of Fertile contended that is the principal's and the CPS' responsibility to address school overcrowding issues by expanding grammar schools. SLN President and retired CPS principal Bob Bifstein, also a member of Burley's Local School Council, confirmed the overcrowding situation, but stated that there just isn't any tax money available to deal with that at this time.

As this is a large development, the developers were questioned as to whether they were required to

supply affordable housing units related to the plan. Acosta stated that the developer will be paying into the Affordable Housing Fund in lieu of supplying the actual units.

The issue was then brought to a virtual vote. In the pre-Zoom era all SLN voting issues were done with a private paper ballot. Meeting moderator Steve Stern suggested that the green check mark option of the Zoom meeting be used. Several members chimed in that they did not have that option and that was confirmed by another member stating that depending on when you downloaded the app you may not have that option. So community meetings via Zoom continue to be an issue, and at times an inadequate option when people cannot meet in person.

It was finally decided that a roll call of the Zoom meeting attendees would be done. The results were: 22 in favor, one opposed and five who abstained. The results were forwarded to Ald. Scott Waguespack's 32nd Ward office.

FUNDRAISER from p. 1

Women, Rivet, Sixty Inches from Center, SoapBox Productions and Organizing, South Side Weekly, StreetWise, StudentsXpress Magazine, The Beverly Review, The Daily Line, Third Coast Review, Win-TV Channel 24, and Windy City Times.