



1200 WILMETTE AVENUE  
WILMETTE, ILLINOIS 60091-0040

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING  
of the  
Plan Commission  
Monday, October 5, 2020 at 5:00 P.M.  
Remote Meeting**

This meeting will be held remotely by the Plan Commission and will be recorded as required by law. The meeting will be broadcast live at <https://www.youtube.com/user/villageofwilmette/live> and on Channel 6 and then published on the Village's YouTube website. Members of the public may submit a comment in advance of the meeting by emailing their comment to [comdev@wilmette.com](mailto:comdev@wilmette.com). All emailed comments received two hours prior to the start of a meeting will be provided, unredacted, to the Plan Commission. Emails received at any time within two hours of the beginning of the meeting until its adjournment will be included in the draft minutes of the meeting. Public comments may be made during the meeting through YouTube Live which will be read aloud during the appropriate portion of the meeting. There is also the option to make a public comment during the meeting via PC, mobile device or phone. For complete details and instructions on joining or participating in the meeting, please visit [click here](#).

**AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call**
- II. Approval of the February 4, 2020 Meeting Minutes**
  1. Motion to approve
  2. Roll call vote on motion
- III. Discussion of Remote Meeting Process**
- IV. Public Comment**

Comments will be taken from the public on any matter not elsewhere on this agenda.
- V. Adjournment**
  1. Motion to adjourn
  2. Roll call vote on motion

**NOTE: The Chairman reserves the right to alter the order of the published agenda if he deems a change necessary.**



**MEETING MINUTES  
PLAN COMMISSION**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2020  
7:00 P.M.**

**VILLAGE HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

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**Members Present:** William Bradford, Chairman  
Mariah DiGrino  
Homa Ghaemi  
Jeffrey Head  
Steven Schwab  
Justin Sheperd  
Michael Taylor

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** John Adler, Director of Community Development  
Jeff Stein, Corporation Counsel  
Dan Manis, Village Engineer

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Bradford called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES; PLAN COMMISSION MEETINGS OF SEPTEMBER 5, 2019 & JANUARY 7, 2020**

Commissioner Taylor moved to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2019 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner DiGrino. Voting yes: Chairman Bradford, Ms. DiGrino, Ms. Ghaemi, Mr. Head, Mr. Schwab, Mr. Sheperd, and Mr. Taylor. Voting no: none. The motion carried.

Commissioner DiGrino moved to approve the minutes of the January 7, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sheperd. Voting yes: Chairman Bradford, Ms. DiGrino, Ms. Ghaemi, Mr. Head, Mr. Schwab, Mr. Sheperd, and Mr. Taylor. Voting no: none. The motion carried.

**III. 2019-P-3 - 1210 Central Avenue – Planned Unit Development**

Commissioner Head moved to recommend approval of the request for a Planned Unit Development Preliminary Plan and Special Use to permit the construction of a mixed use building containing commercial space and approximately 109 dwelling units located in the VC, Village Center, zoning district - Pedestrian Commercial West at 1210 Central Avenue, in conformance with the plans submitted. The use to run with the use.

Commissioner Schwab seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Charmain Bradford	No
Mariah DiGrino	No
Homa Ghaemi	No
Jeffrey Head	No
Steven Schwab	Yes
Justin Sheperd	No
Michael Taylor	Yes

Motion failed

Chairman Bradford said that is a negative recommendation and the Village Board will meet on February 25, 2020 to receive the recommendation.

Case Minutes are attached.

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**V. AJDOURNMENT.**

At 10:00 p.m., Commissioner Schwab moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner DiGrino and the voice vote was all ayes and no nays. **The motion carried.**

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Adler  
Director of Community Development

**Case Minutes 2019-P-03 – 1210 Central Avenue**

**3.0 TESTIMONY, COMMENTS AND ARGUMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE APPLICANT**

**3.1 Persons appearing for the applicant**

- 3.11 Mark Segal, Senior Vice President, Optima  
Bill Duke, Senior Vice President, Optima,  
Matt Cison, Senior Vice President, Optima  
Hal Francke, Attorney, Meltzer Purtil and Stelle  
Luay Aboona, Principal and Civil Engineer, KLOA  
Amy Rosenfeld Kaufman, Director of Development and Community Relations, Community Partners for Affordable Housing  
Fran Fazio, Vice President and Civil Engineer, Manhard Consulting  
Taylor Corbin, Civil Engineer, Manhard Consulting  
Mike Stopka, Associate Principal, Strategic Sustainability, BuroHappold Engineering  
Aaron Hillman, Landscape Architect, Collaborative V Design Studio Inc

**3.2 Summary of comments**

3.21 Chairman Bradford went through information about the Plan Commission and its role. The Plan Commission hears case, makes recommendations to the Village Board and the latter has the authority to grant or deny the recommendations. If the case is completed tonight, this case will be heard at the Village Board meeting on February 25, 2020. Anyone who plans to speak needs to be sworn. Those who were speaking were duly sworn. He said the goal is to complete the meeting by 10:30 PM. He is proposing that a schedule for tonight be based on the following:

- Allow the applicants to present changes of what was submitted at the January meeting 45 minutes
- Public comments 60 minutes
- Applicant’s response 45 minutes
- Commission discussion/questions 60 minutes

Chairman Bradford clarified that commissioners can ask questions at any time.

3.22 Mr. Adler said that the case is 2019-P-3, 1210 Central Avenue. It is a request by Optima Wilmette for a special use to permit the construction of a mixed-use building containing commercial space and 109 dwelling units in the VC zoning district, pedestrian commercial west. Most correspondence from interested parties was emailed to commissioners, but some emails/letters were received after the packet went out so there are physical copies of some emails/letters. There are three

new letters and the applicant also dropped off a new packet of updated information. It is his understanding that the changes have to do with the glass and building color because the glass now being proposed is clear.

The applicant's changes were summarized in the staff report. The applicant will present those changes.

3.23 Mark Segal, Senior Vice President, Optima is at the meeting with several colleagues.

- Bill Duke, Senior Vice President, Optima
- Matt Cison, Senior Vice President, Optima
- Hal Frankce, Meltzer, Purtil and Stelle
- Luay Aboona, President, KOLA – traffic consultant
- Amy Rosenfeld Kaufman, Director of Development and Community Relations, Community Partners for Affordable Housing
- Taylor Corbin and Fran Fazzio, Manhard – civil engineer
- Mike Stopka, Associate Principal, BuroHappold Engineering – sustainability consultant
- Aaron Hillman, landscape architect, Collaborative V Design Studio Inc

Mr. Segal said they are very excited to be at the meeting to present the updates to the program. As a team, they spent a lot of time thinking about comments from the Appearance Review Commission on January 6, 2020, as well as comments from the Plan Commission meeting on January 7, 2020 and their ongoing dialogs with village staff and community members to try to respond to concerns and questions presented during that time period.

He will discuss the program changes made after the January 7, 2020 meeting.

3.24 The first request they heard at the ARC and PC meetings was to change the Central Avenue Street frontage to try to activate the frontage to bring more transparency to Central Avenue. They completely redesigned this frontage. They placed the community amenity space along the exterior of the building to provide active engagement with the project by relocating all but one of the residential units off of Central. They now have one residential unit on the Central Ave frontage at the very western end of the development.

They replaced the garden wall stone panels along Central Avenue with floor to ceiling glass running 110', creating ground floor transparency along Central Ave and this is 89.3% transparent. At the last meeting, they were asking for an exception to not satisfy that transparency requirement of 40% and now they are 89.3%.

They reduced the height of the garden wall stone panels throughout the project from 7.5 feet to 6.5 feet. This has resulted in a 1' increase in the height of the clerestory window at the lone residential unit at the western end on Central Ave. There was

also a request to create more setback, so they increased to 5' the setback along a 50' stretch of the Central Avenue frontage immediately to the west of the residential entrance. They added landscaping throughout that setback. They worked with village staff to provide for the elimination of the large planter beds on Central to the west of the residential entrance to provide for the enhanced pedestrian traffic area that the public requested.

They preserved pedestrian circulation area and on street parking by retaining the existing fire hydrant at the corner of Central and Green Bay. They worked with village staff and the fire department on this element.

They added another streetlight to the east of the alley and set back the garden stone wall 11.5' from the property line to provide a visibility corridor for pedestrians and vehicles that are interacting at the alley and the sidewalk at the western end of the property.

They were asked to reduce the perceived presence at street level of the rooftop amenity space and the elevator overrun. They did a complete redesign of the rooftop space and added additional landscaping.

They reduced the height of the elevator overrun, which is the tallest portion of the building, but comprises 205 square feet of area for the project. They reduced that from 81' to 79.92' and made it as tight as possible to the building.

They have an amenity area on the building roof, but the height of that space is 72.6'.

There was concern about the visibility of the elevator overrun from neighboring rights of way. They relocated the elevator overrun approximately 25' north into the building interior to eliminate its visibility from nearby public rights of way. The overrun is set back about 65' from the southern property line, 100' from the northern property line, 98' from the eastern property line, and 121.5' from the western property line.

- 3.25 Commissioner Head asked the applicant if he could take the commissioners through the design changes by using the plans. It's hard having only the spoken word about the changes and seeing changes on plans would help.
- 3.26 Mr. Segal said he could do whatever the commission wanted. Before he goes to plans, he wanted to note that during the course of conversations with the ARC and the PC, there were questions and concerns about glass color. They had previously proposed bronze glass and a dark brown aluminum window wall system and slab edge. They had requested an exception for colored glass. They started to explore what they could do differently. One of the most significant changes and what is new in the packet is that they are proposing a clear glass eliminating that exception. They changed the metal color to a dark gray. They will talk more about this during the discussion. They can now more meaningfully respond to the request from

community members to enhance the bird friendliness of the design of the building. They will talk about this in more detail.

The first rendering depicts the development with the new look. They put up the first board.

3.27 Commissioner Head asked if there was a mirror finish on the glass as reflected on the renderings.

3.28 Mr. Segal said that was the glare of the sun off of the windows. Along Central, they completely changed that frontage. The stone panel used to run all the way to the residential entrance and extend beyond. Now the frontage is totally transparent glass, engaging the public.

The other meaningful change in that rendering is the introduction of Optima's vertical landscaping system. They incorporated what they had hoped to originally do and after working the landscape architect, they identified native plantings that will survive and thrive. It will provide an accent for vertical landscaping. It creates a different element in the building design, shadow, different visualization of the façade. They added three trees along the southern façade at the roof as well as three trees on the eastern façade of the roof. That provides additional landscaping, which relates to a previous comment from the community, as well as providing an additional screening element for the rooftop programming.

3.29 Commissioner DiGrino asked if the plantings on the balcony would be green year-round.

3.30 Mr. Segal said they would be green year-round but may go dormant but will stay green. The landscape architect will talk about details of this element.

3.31 Chairman Bradford asked if that element was used in the Chicago area before.

3.32 Mr. Segal said they have not used the proposed system in the Chicago area, but the landscape architect has used comparable systems in this area. Management will maintain the landscaping. They are creating a uniform aesthetic for the property.

3.33 Commissioner Sheperd asked if management had to access units to get to that landscaping.

3.34 Mr. Segal said they did have to go into units to access the landscaping. The process is done at a number of Arizona communities and they coordinate with the landscape contractor for maintenance.

He then shared an update of the rendering from across the street at the Metra station.

3.35 Commissioner Head asked what was protruding from the roof.

- 3.36 Mr. Segal said it is the mechanical screening at the top of the building.

He showed a better view of the Central Avenue frontage. The stone panels had gone all the way to the entrance and continued to another area. They have now opened it up with 110' of floor to ceiling glass. This is the area that is setback 5'. They conform with the traditional tree grate and this is consistent with the eastern side of the Central frontage as well as along Green Bay.

- 3.37 Commissioner Head asked how the sidewalk compared to the sidewalk in other areas of the VC.

- 3.38 Mr. Segal said it is consistent with the standard sidewalk in downtown Wilmette. He continued and talked about the context image showing the 611 Green Bay building as well as their development. The screening trees are visible. One can view the enclosed amenity space on the roof. What used to be visible is the elevator overrun and it is no longer visible.

He talked about a perspective looking east from Central and Park. The elevator overrun is not seen although the amenity space is visible. There are trees used as a screening element on the western façade. Based on conversations, the trees will be maintained at a height no higher than the amenity space. The trees at the southern and eastern facades will rise above the amenity volume as a more robust screen.

He showed a view east just to the north of the Central and Park intersections. There is a side yard that exists at a corner that does not exist anywhere else on Park Avenue. There are homes along the Park Avenue frontage. He showed the winter condition looking over the side yard and the townhomes that are there. In another depiction, he showed the top residential floor in winter and the amenity space.

The next rendering was if one was looking west from Central at the intersection of Central and Wilmette Avenues. The elevator overrun really cannot be seen. There is a hint of the amenity space. The most predominant view of the roof is of the trees.

He next showed the level one plan. It highlights what they have changed in programming along Central Avenue. The darker orange is amenity space that used to be on the interior courtyard, and it is now relocated along the Central frontage. They have the management office in its original location. There is a 50' run with a 5' setback and landscaping. There is a 15' setback at the entry to the residential lobby. There is a pre-existing 10' setback for the covered indoor and outdoor space along the retail. In the back, there is a cutback in the stone panel. It goes from the remaining residential unit to the rear. It cuts off and then continues along the western frontage. The notch creates a view corridor for the site lines between pedestrians and vehicles.

- 3.39 Chairman Bradford referenced the elevations sent on Friday; he could not tell to what extent the stone wall is along the alley. Does that continue north to the Com

Ed pad?

- 3.40 Mr. Segal said it also encloses the dog run. It will be clearer on the elevations.

Other feedback they got was can they cut back the landscaping that was serving to buffer the garage entrance and the loading areas so delivery trucks could pull through vs. pulling into the loading areas and backing up and disturbing neighbors to the west. They cut back the landscaping as requested.

He showed the elevator setback. They have recessed it. Other than that, the basic programming on the first floor remains the same.

Commissioner Head asked the applicant to talk about the retail presence. A number of people reached out to him with concerns about the depth for restaurant space. At 611 Green Bay they have had a hard time leasing. The village is concerned about vacant storefronts.

- 3.41 Mr. Segal said that at the last meeting, their commercial brokers were at the meeting to talk about the suitability of the space for a restaurant/retail use. The brokers are active in the village. The space as depicted is consistent with space they recently leased in another project. It is a tough retail environment. There is 20,000 square feet of vacant retail space along Green Bay Road in Wilmette not including what may or may not happen with Imperial Motors. He said that he and his colleagues believe that an advantage their site has is the corner location. The glass façade makes it more engaging with pedestrians. They tried to create indoor/outdoor dining. This is different than what exists at 611 Green Bay.

They are providing on-site parking, 23 spaces, for retail users and the community. They do not have this parking at 611 Green Bay. People who looked at 611 Green Bay were concerned about parking. Mr. Segal said that in a challenging retail environment, they addressed specific factors in their design and got positive feedback from retailers and restaurants that they spoke to. Nothing is done yet because there is no project yet. He thinks that his project is different than 611 Green Bay.

- 3.42 Commissioner Head asked if the floor plates were comparable between the applicant's project and 611 Green Bay regarding the depth from sidewalk to back of house.

Mr. Segal said that the configuration is different. They tried to illustrate potential layouts for a restaurant. There is a floor plan that has divided space for indoor and outdoor seating. That has a 95' depth. It depends on the reference point when calculating the depth of the space. Having 95' of depth, which is similar to what they leased at their Chicago project, works well. There is space available for a traditional retail user.

He reviewed the dimensioning for the restaurant space. He reiterated that the depth is 95'. The remaining retail space is 30' at its narrowest and 42.5' at its widest. At the last meeting, he said they extended the service corridor around to contemplate for a potential division of the space into two uses. If they did not have two uses and if someone took the entire space for a restaurant, there is a 65' long by 25' wide kitchen, 17' wide seating area, a reception area off of the lobby and an 18' wide bathroom. 42'6" is the depth and there is an 82' run until someone gets to the bathroom. They worked with designers to lay out what could be done with the space. They are confident that a restaurant and another retail use could go in that space. This is their front door, so it has to be successful. They don't want to build a project that won't be occupied.

- 3.43 Commissioner Sheperd said earlier Mr. Segal talked about making space for people to pull into the alley without backing out. Would they pull parallel to the alley between and not be in front of the parking ramp.
- 3.44 Mr. Segal said they would pull in and pivot in the loading area, so they are not blocking the parking ramp.
- 3.45 Commissioner DiGrino asked if the applicant had any letters of interest or expressions of interest in that space from retailers.
- 3.46 Mr. Siegal said they have nothing in writing. They have had expressions of interest from people they spoke to. People are not anxious to engage until they know that the project will move forward.
- 3.47 Commissioner DiGrino asked what a typical depth for retail space would be.
- 3.48 Mr. Siegal said probably around 60'.
- 3.49 Chairman Bradford said that would be for a narrow street frontage. In the proposed building they have taken the retail space and rotated it.
- 3.50 Mr. Segal thanked the Chair for pointing that out. They have twisted the retail space so the depth is actually 95' when viewed off of Central.

He continued with discussion about the roof. They have five trees along the western façade that would grow no higher than the amenity space. One thing that they added is three trees along the southern façade, as well as the eastern façade. There is recessing of the elevators that provides a setback. They narrowed the size of the amenity volume. They were asked to decrease the dimension of the roof deck and they did it with an 11.1% reduction. It was 6,750 square feet and now it is 6,000 square feet of the overall 30,000 square foot roof area.

At the last meeting, they talked about pergolas on two roof terraces. They eliminated this concept.

Regarding landscaping, they spoke with the village forestry staff and there was agreement that they can increase the tree caliper from 2” to 4”. This will allow more developed trees at the opening of the project.

- 3.51 Commissioner Head asked about the nice rooftop greenery. Is there anything besides flowers and trees? Is there open space that is public and shared? Does the building cover the lot on all sides?
- 3.52 Mr. Segal said that the building does not cover the lot on all sides. He talked about an open space that is behind the wall. They are not building lot line to lot line. There is courtyard space that is not public, but it is set aside as open space. They want to create light volume in the building as it goes up. 72% of the site is covered. He talked about the 28% that is open. There is 21% open space as they go up the building height.
- 3.53 Commissioner Head asked if there was public open space like benches or seating. Is there a public amenity other than street trees?
- 3.54 Mr. Segal said in one area they are asking for an exception to not build lot line to lot line which is a requirement of the code. They set it back to create landscaping. Along the Green Bay frontage there will be bike racks and some benches. Those are the pieces for the public sidewalk.
- 3.55 Commissioner DiGrino asked the applicant to revisit the roof plan. There is a lot of green on the plan but clarified that the green is not necessarily landscaping. What are the specific landscaped areas on the roof?
- 3.56 Mr. Segal said the landscaping would be trees on the west façade, trees on the southern façade, trees on the eastern façade. There is a multi-colored ring shown on the plan that is around the roof terrace and that is a landscaped area. That is the only landscaped area on the roof. At the last hearing, they talked about roofing materials. He misspoke at the last hearing. There is a roof membrane and in addition to that they have a material called T-Clear. The latter is a 2’ by 4’ composite roof covering material consisting of rigid insulation in a colored cementitious board. It locks together in a tongue and groove manner across the roof. He showed a rendering with that material on the roof. He showed tree plantings at one of their existing developments. He showed a sample of the T-Clear roof material.
- 3.57 Commissioner Ghaemi noted that that is not walkable surface.
- 3.58 Mr. Segal showed the area that the residents would access outside. There are walkable areas for maintenance purposes, but not for the residents to go on.
- 3.59 Commissioner Ghaemi noted that the material was pretty light and asked how it was locked down.
- 3.60 Mr. Segal said it adheres to the roof membrane. He showed a photo of an existing

installation.

- 3.61 Chairman Bradford told the applicant that he has 10 minutes remaining for his presentation.
- 3.62 Mr. Segal showed a photo of the vertical landscaping that is at one of their projects in Arizona. As part of their interactions with the community, there was a request for them to try to make the building more bird friendly.
- 3.63 Commissioner Ghaemi asked that they revisit the pavers on the roof. She said they have them in Arizona, which is a totally different climate. At this project, they are dealing with higher uplift and a lot of freeze/thaw. Have they used the material in Chicago? She knows that IBC has high values for uplift.
- 3.64 Bill Duke, Optima, said they have used that roof system on quite a few projects in Arizona. Commissioner Ghaemi is correct in saying that Chicago's climate is different but there is a similar approach. There is more insulation required for Chicago's climate. But the membrane is on top of the concrete slab and then there is insulation above that. They can achieve the R value that is required by code with that insulation.
- 3.65 Commissioner Ghaemi said that she is not really worried about the R value. She is worried that they have concrete, the membrane, and the pavers on top of the membrane. They are fairly light. She is concerned about the wind uplift.
- 3.66 Mr. Duke said that two things are going on. They are locked and also adhered to the roof in locations on the panel.
- 3.67 Commissioner Ghaemi asked where they used this product in Chicago.
- 3.68 Mr. Duke said they have not used the product in Chicago, but they can get the manufacturer's specs with warranty information.
- 3.69 Commissioner Ghaemi said she would like to see the specs.
- 3.70 Mr. Segal clarified that he had about five minutes remaining.
- 3.71 Chairman Bradford said that was correct if they adhered to the proposed schedule. But he then said that their presentation could continue.
- 3.72 Mr. Segal wanted to focus on the public benefit component regarding changes and the project.

One of the public benefits was that they spoke with community members who wanted the buildings to be designed to be more bird friendly. They tried to focus on the first three floors for bird friendliness to supplement the existing bird friendly

aspects of the building design. That is the focus area of what LEED has laid out. LEED created a pilot credit for bird deterrents and collision deterrents, and they focus on the first three floors of the building. He said they are proposing to use glass materials that would have the requisite bird threat level categories as determined by the American Bird Conservancy to use on the first three floors of the building, surrounding the building. They would achieve an estimated zone 1 bird collision threat rating based upon the proposed materials, which is 14.3. The LEED pilot credit standards is not more than 15. They satisfy the LEED standard for bird friendly. That is in addition to use of terraces which are a bird friendly tool. They used metal guard rails at the terraces vs. glass and this is a bird friendly tool. They built interior corridors so there is no light pollution as they go up the building. There will be timers on the rooftop lights. He showed images of the areas that would be covered by the bird glass.

They eliminated a number of exceptions that they had previously requested most notably the fence exception. They reduced the height, they are eliminating colored glass, and they added 110' of transparent glass that is floor to ceiling on Central.

Regarding public benefits that the project will deliver to the community, they are committed to deliver a minimum of two green globes out of a maximum program rating of four green globes under the green globes sustainability certification program that is like achieving a LEED silver building certification. They are going to enhance the bird friendliness of the design. They are making a \$1.6M donation to advance affordable housing opportunities that will potentially be leveraged into \$2.9M to deliver 14 affordable housing units in the village. They are providing for 23 onsite parking spaces for public use. Use of the spaces will be limited to no more than two hours. It will be monitored by a tow service engaged by Optima. They will have valet parking. They are providing two electric vehicle charging stations that are the first of their kind in the VC. They have identified a number of goals and policies of the comprehensive plan and VC master plan that they believe that the development satisfies.

### **Commissioner Questions**

- 3.73 Commissioner Head asked why they didn't seek LEED certification. The LEED silver does not seem like a public benefit type of standard. It is a baseline standard. Why did they select Green Globe? Two out of four green globes seems like a middle ground and not something to pitch as a public benefit. It is a straightforward sustainability standard.
- 3.74 Mr. Segal said they selected Green Globes because of the ongoing engagement of the Green Globes processes. Green Globes provides for an audit process as they go through certification. It culminates in an onsite physical inspection of the development to make sure they delivered what they said. The LEED process is different. A person fills out forms and submits the forms. You can check boxes and LEED will send you a certificate that indicates you achieved LEED certification.

They wanted to hold themselves to a higher standard. The Green Globes process will send out an auditor and do a physical inspection. That is a community benefit.

Their commitment is to achieve the equivalent of LEED silver and their goal is to exceed LEED silver. But the commitment is a public benefit. The sustainability consultant is at the meeting to talk about Green Globes.

- 3.76 Commissioner Head said that Mr. Segal answered his questions. Regarding affordable housing, how did they come to \$1.6 M as the proposed donation?
- 3.77 Mr. Segal said that as they looked at what they could achieve in terms of a program with CPAH and what the project could sustain and that is how they came to the conclusion.
- 3.78 Commissioner Head asked if it was a percentage of the total development cost. He is not understanding Mr. Segal's answer.
- 3.79 Mr. Segal said they came to a per unit cost and value for what they were proposing. That is what they proposed to the village. They worked with CPAH to leverage that amount and it turned into \$2.9M.
- 3.80 Commissioner Head asked CPAH to talk about how they see this actually turning into housing. It has been a challenge to see affordable housing developed in the village.
- 3.81 Ms. Kaufman said that this would fit with their land trust model.
- 3.82 Commissioner Head asked about the acquisition price they would try to achieve under their model.
- 3.83 Ms. Kaufman said she does not know exactly. Her colleague Rob Anthony did a look in the market to see what was available as well as the price range they would target, which she guesses would be in the \$250,000 to \$300,000 range. The acquisition and development costs have to equal x. They do fundraising and they can bridge some gap. The way it should work is that you want acquisition and development plus proceeds to equal the cost. They built enough subsidy in so they can spread the units out in the village. They should not be clustered in one area.
- 3.84 Commissioner Head said he is having a hard time finding those units that meet the baseline price anywhere and definitely not in a non-clustered way.
- 3.85 Commissioner DiGrino said there was a clear comment from the ARC and was spoken of at the last hearing asking to meet the standard for the ground floor height of 14'. They came back maintaining that 13' line and she wants to understand the rationale. It seems like an easy fix. Why didn't they do that?

- 3.86 Mr. Segal said they heard a couple of voices express a concern about that issue. From their perspective they believe that 13' is sufficient to attract the right retail tenants. With the floor to ceiling glass they have ringing the property they thought that would further enhance the pedestrians as well as the retail experience. Given the sensitivity of overall height of the project and their belief that they achieved the pedestrian engagement and retail use, they did not see it being beneficial to the overall project to increase the building height.
- 3.87 Commissioner DiGrino said that she might be the lone voice on this issue, but it seems to her that the 1' is more impactful at maintaining a pedestrian scale. The 1' would be more impactful at the base v. at the height. There are other height issues to cover. It seems like that 1' is important to not just attracting the right tenants, but maintaining a pedestrian scale. It will balance the proportions of the building so that when there is a shorter ground floor presence, it makes the building seem that much more imposing.
- 3.88 Mr. Segal said that their sense is that if the commission wants them to increase the building height, they would be open to that.
- 3.89 Commissioner DiGrino asked if they studied any other massing. Did they look at shifting some of the massing away from the west side and perhaps pushing it onto the east side?
- 3.90 Mr. Segal said they already have a 25' setback on the west side and given the height concerns for the overall development, they did not see a chance to shift more mass to the east.
- 3.91 Commissioner DiGrino said that she understands that sensitivity, but it would seem that the mass on the west side is more impactful to the neighbors. She would be more open to entertaining height relief on the east side of the property more so than on the west side especially if there is a way to shift the scale over. She does not know what visual impact it would have on the building, shadows, line of site, and elements like that. It would be interesting to understand that.
- 3.92 Mr. Segal said as was discussed at the last meeting, they conducted the shadow studies to show the effect of the building and shadows on the neighboring properties. He talked about the comparative study to show what they are proposing to build to what is allowed under existing zoning. For this purpose, they made sure to include the permitted height encroachments under the zoning ordinance. It is 52' plus 2' for a parapet plus additional space for a screening wall and additional height for an elevator overrun. They also added what the impact of the shadow of their elevator overrun and roof top amenity space is. There is not a material difference with regard to the shadow being cast by their building to what could be built under existing zoning. There are a few instances where that is not the case, but very limited instances at extreme times. In only a few instances does the amenity space actually cast a shadow off of the building and in no case does it cast a shadow

beyond the shadow of the building base.

When the arc of the sun comes a certain way and they were to shift volume, that would create a higher element to cast shadow further than the building done currently.

He showed more images and noted how tight the shadow comparison is what is allowed by right and showed this during different seasons of the year. They wanted to show the context of the neighborhood. Here is their development and he showed the Imperial Motors site, the townhome development to the west and here there are a series of single-family homes along Park and the smaller structures are some garages for single family homes. The single-family homes continue further north along Park Avenue.

- 3.93 Commissioner Schwab asked questions about the shadow study and the site line impact that happens.
- 3.94 Mr. Segal showed the impact of their building in comparison with an underlying zoned building would be. A number of different perspectives were shown.

The first issue raised was what someone will see if they are on the roof. What do people in his building see and what do the neighbors see of the building? Because there is no walkway on the western side of the proposed building, the furthest someone can be on the roof to have a site line would be to stand at the western façade of the closed amenity space. As a result of the setback of the amenity space one has to navigate the angle of the edge of the building roof. That means that the person on the rooftop cannot see anything that is within the purple area.

At their top floors, with the underlying zoning, this would be the roof. So someone standing in a particular place would have an angle of sight. The area in purple is not visible from the roof.

They then decided to look at what would happen if someone was standing in the backyard of a home along Park that did not have to deal with the two townhome condition and only had to deal with one townhome. He showed the double townhome situation. Otherwise it is one townhome with garages and backyards. If someone is standing in a back yard along Park Avenue what will they look up at? They are still obscured by the single townhome – the easternmost townhome along the western side of the alley. The visible area for those people ends up being a space that he pointed out on the plan. He said that because of the setback of their amenity space, someone standing in the backyard does not perceive the amenity space because of the angle. They would have to be looking over the townhome.

The final exhibit is what happens at the sidewalk vantage point for Park Avenue. This means that there is no landscaping obstruction, no home obstructing the view, but they still have to deal with navigating the townhomes. Those people would be

catching that view, but they are clipped off in a certain area because of the recess of the amenity space on the roof top.

They did look at the different conditions for site lines. They hope that the diagram illustrates the different perspectives that people from the building will have and people looking at the building will have.

- 3.95 Commissioner Head asked about the difference between the 62' and the 52' height.
- 3.96 Mr. Segal said that 62' is the height of the base roof of their building. The 52' is the base roof of the underlying zoning. One component of relief they are requesting is to go to 62. While they have additional components on the roof, they are asking for exceptions for the permitted height encroachments. Those encroachments do not impact what is being viewed to the west because of the way it is setback. What would or could impact if someone were to build according to what is allowed by zoning, if they built the conditions to the end of the building. The design he showed accommodated the 25' setback from the west. They are trying to take what they are proposing and compare it with what someone could come to the table with if they had conforming zoning and then comparing and contrasting what the site lines would be.
- 3.97 Commissioner DiGrino asked the applicant to revisit the ground floor layout. She is hoping he can clarify the orientation of the dwelling units that appear at the west side. Are the primary entrances internal?
- 3.98 Mr. Segal said that the primary entrances are internal.
- 3.99 Commissioner DiGrino said that makes sense to have internal primary entrances, but it seems to orient the rear of the units to Central thus necessitating the screening wall, which is intentioned with creating a pedestrian friendly environment.
- 3.100 Mr. Segal said that part of the stone panels is now 40' of unit and another 20' so it is about a 60' run of stone panels with clerestory windows above it for the one unit that sits along that one corner. There originally was a 140' run of that stone panel. The entrances are from the interior of the building, but they don't view it as the back end of the unit on Central.

#### **After 4.43 of public comment**

- 3.101 Mr. Segal thanked the community members for their engagement and comments. He apologized if he did not address this area as clearly as he thought he did. Regarding the line of site study, they were trying to highlight that this was their building as designed and what could be built by right. The red is what could be built as of right and his proposal goes above that. He showed the roof for the as of right building. He showed where residences would be in either building. Anyone along

the western façade has a view to the west whether Optima's building is built or the as of right building is built.

What will people see? The people in the townhomes above the fence at the alley have a view in each direction regardless of building height. Once the first set of townhomes is cleared, anybody in the Park Avenue space has a view to the west no matter whether it is their building or an as of right building.

Someone asked about adding a green roof. They will satisfy the Green Globes certification and try to do better than that. One of the things they learned are that green roofs are a problem for bird friendliness.

Part of the question that has come up about public benefits has to do with what is a public benefit? What the village has said in the zoning ordinance as being a public benefit, constitutes a public benefit. If someone says that for example affordable housing is not a benefit to them, it could still be a benefit to the community. The benefits provided follow the guidelines in the zoning ordinance and provide a broader benefit to the village as articulated regarding the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. He talked about what he thought were public benefits to the village community.

There was a lot of discussion about the master plan and requested variances. The master plan spoke to a lot of issues. The master plan represented a series of goals and objectives for the village as it considers its future. He believes that the development fulfills many of those goals and objectives. This has been stated verbally and in writing. The master plan acknowledged that it might not achieve all objectives for every site including specific design parameters. He thinks that Optima is achieving objectives of the VC master plan. Their design objectives align with the site's uniqueness, what current market conditions are, and how they are trying to achieve/fulfill those objectives.

The PUD process is intended to create an opportunity for the village to weigh what the proposed request for changes are against the perceived benefit of the PUD. That is what the commissioners will evaluate and make a recommendation to the village board, who will then make its own determination on the policy implications. They believe that their project is an asset to the community. They look forward to delivering this project to the village and enhancing the quality of life in the overall community.

There was discussion about parking and bike parking. They believe that the parking they are providing is sufficient for their residents and to meet the market demand that is there. There is a difference between what one might experience at a TOD in the village vs. what one might see in downtown Chicago. They think that they can use the excess parking capacity for other uses to further the development's benefits.

Chairman Bradford acknowledged tonight that this is not the ARC, Mr. Siegal noted that the master plan does articulate the fact that there is not a distinct architectural style in the VC. The ARC acknowledged that there is no distinctive architectural style in the VC. The master plan and the ARC both acknowledge that there should be diversity in architectural design in the VC to enrich the community's experience.

Mr. Siegal asked commissioners if they had questions about landscaping or Green Globes certification, some experts are at the hearing and could address questions.

- 3.101 Chairman Bradford said he would like to hear more from the landscape architect about what is proposed for balconies.
- 3.102 Mr. Segal introduced Aaron Hillman, Collaborative V Design Studio.

Mr. Hillman said that about ten years ago, Optima developed a vertical integrated landscape system that is state of the art and one of a kind. It has not been done in Chicago but has been in multiple projects in the Phoenix area. Chicago is at the forefront of vertical and integrated green architecture. He talked about Whole Foods that has 5,000 square feet of literal vertical wall vegetation that was recently installed in Chicago. Millennium Park is a great example of limited soil profiles and is very successful. He showed a close up of terrace planters that were integrated in Scottsdale AZ. He knows that the climate is different and a different plant palette is necessary. But he works nationally. What got this to work in AZ will make this work anywhere in the US. There was a decade long experiment before this method was integrated into the Optima building.

They looked at potential plant species that would work in Chicago. Evergreens would provide year-round interest. They will be very hearty. The real feel is to get them to drape and fall. The last image was taken less than two growing seasons from the initial planting. On the Optima website are other images ranging from 4-7 years old. The draping effect engulfs the building. They are proposing integrating the vertical landscape system into the planters. It adds a focal point. Only Optima has done this system through their massive expenditure.

It starts with a good water source that is fortified with nutrients and fertigation. It is piped through the building via risers and then out. Micro-irrigation drop emitters are for each individual plant that can be refined based on an individual plant's needs. Different exposures play into effect. Each side of the building has a different unique look and feel. It has been very successful in AZ. Green roofs are successful in Chicago.

- 3.103 Commissioner Ghaemi said she didn't disagree with him. They will come back the next year in spring. They need to show a picture in winter. Only bushes last in winter in Chicago.

- 3.104 Mr. Hillman said that plants selected are chosen based on Evergreen value. None of them have a full dormancy period. At the existing projects, 2-3 times/years, facilities go through the units to maintain them. Plant replacement is at a minimum. He talked about the examples that they went through about the green roofs in Chicago.
- 3.105 Commissioner Ghaemi said that those pictures were taken in spring or summer. She doesn't see a fall picture. Six months in Chicago is the winter season.
- 3.106 Mr. Hillman said that pictures of the plant materials are not typically taken in the winter.
- 3.107 Commissioner DiGrino said that the Chicago City Hall green roof doesn't look like that except for 45-60 days a year. She appreciates that a lot of advancements were made. Every developer she works with talks about a landscaped rooftop amenity and they are talking about four seasons of plants with the winter not being green. It is unrealistic to expect the commissioners to accept that these will look like beautiful plants 12 months out of the year.
- 3.108 Mr. Hillman said he saw ivy that is still green on his ride to tonight's meeting. Junipers and Winter Creepers are still green. Euonymus is still green. That is what will be seen hanging off of the building. There will not be short lived annuals or grasses.
- 3.109 Commissioner DiGrino talked about revolutionary advancements in soils that are happening in Chicago and hopes that the applicant is more on the cutting edge with this technology.
- 3.110 Mr. Hillman said that there are growers in Chicago that are focusing on green roof plants. Specimen trees can be bought and placed in the planters. He cannot argue with the science. Nutrients, light, and water will ensure a successful planting.
- 3.111 Commissioner DiGrino said that Mr. Hillman mentioned an irrigation system. Is that integrated into the balcony system?
- 3.112 Mr. Hillman said it is integrated into the balcony system. It comes through the basement via risers. Before it is pumped out of the basement it has a fertilizer injector system that carries that water up through mechanical chases in the building and out to the balcony planters. Each planter is its own zone and will be on separate timers. An evaporation system will be in place that knows through the satellite system how much the plant is releasing and how much more it needs to take back in for oxygen. That technology is available to all of us.
- 3.113 Chairman Bradford told the applicant that he had ten minutes to finish.
- 3.114 Mr. Segal said that the last point he wanted to make was that Ms. Kaufman reminded him that when they are talking about the amount of funds being allocated

for affordable housing, there is another \$2M of sale proceeds that would be generated by the for sale product that would be recycled into the overall affordable housing program.

#### **4.0 INTERESTED PARTIES**

##### **4.1 Persons speaking on the application**

- 4.11 Bob Surman, 1033 Green Bay Road
- 4.12 Christine Moran, 823 Ashland Avenue
- 4.13 Annie Finnegan, 930 Oakwood Avenue
- 4.14 Susan Karol, 712 Park Avenue
- 4.15 Paul Doty, 1924 Lake Avenue
- 4.16 Amanda Nugent, 500 Lake Avenue
- 4.17 Barbara Bischoff Kleeman, 1223 Washington Avenue
- 4.18 Joel Lunkas, 811 Park Avenue
- 4.19 Julie Nelson, 714 Elmwood Avenue
- 4.20 Jeff Axelrod, 631 Central Avenue
- 4.21 Beth Drucker, Go Green Wilmette
- 4.22 Delia Conache, 747 Lavergne Avenue
- 4.23 April Cesaretti, 935 Oakwood Avenue
- 4.24 Alexandra Cole, 1026 Linden Avenue
- 4.25 Andrew Gustafson, 720 Park Avenue

##### **4.2 Summary of Comments**

- 4.21 Chairman Bradford asked speakers to limit comments to three minutes. If someone spoke at the January meeting, all testimony was recorded and is part of the record. If they have more comments that they did not express in January, the person can express those comments. If a previous speaker makes the same point someone wants to make, he asked that the same comments not be given again.

Quite a few communications were received from residents that are part of the board packets. Communications were from people who were for and against the proposal. Several letters were lengthy. He asked that people not stand up and read their letters.

In January, there was a fair amount of discussion regarding affordable housing units being within the development or not within the development. The developer chose to move forward with a donation to the village. He would appreciate not revisiting the fact that there is no affordable housing within the proposed development. There were a number of comments received about the building appearance. This element is not before the plan commission. There is a wide difference of opinion as to whether or not the building is attractive and/or is appropriate for the village. He leaves the ultimate decision to the village board.

- 4.22 Bob Surman, 1033 Green Bay Road, said this property does not impact him as he is closer to Elmwood. He appreciates the work done by the commissioners. He was on the Plan Commission and helped rewrite the PUD. He is currently on the Zoning Board and he is a commercial architect.

He is concerned about the setback on Green Bay Road on the east façade. He worked on the 611 Green Bay building and the PC pushed to have that building set back that amount. With the Optima building, it appears to be overhanging. This is a compromise.

He talked about the north lot line. This is something he dealt with on the 611 Green Bay property. What is happening on the lot line and how does it impact the neighbor? Is the project being created injurious to the Imperial Motors project? He assumes that the glass is spandrel glass. Will it have protection? Will it be glazed internally or externally?

Mr. Segal said it would be glazed externally.

Mr. Surman said he is talking about the future. Imperial Motors has the same right to build on the lot line. They could build right up to the spandrel glass with a concrete block wall. As a rental, it is not that big of a deal. But if the building was converted to a condo building, it could be a problem. Now Optima would be impacting Imperial Motors property by building right on the lot line. Imperial Motors could build a solid concrete wall right up to that. Imperial Motors could also build a balcony and the two balconies would be close.

It may not seem like that big of a deal. But it could impact Imperial Motors. If it was a condo or rental there would be no light into the courtyard space or limited light.

- 4.23 Christine Moran, 823 Ashland Avenue, said she would not comment about onsite affordable housing, but did want to comment about the amount. \$1.6M seems somewhat disingenuous for 14 units. That would be \$114,000/unit. Even if they can leverage other state or county resources to get to \$2.9M, that still is only \$207,000/unit. She did a google search and there are six units on the market for under \$200,000 in the village. It doesn't seem like the amount is reasonable for this development.
- 4.24 Annie Finnegan, 930 Oakwood Avenue, thanked the commissioners for their hard work and time. If there are going to be meetings on big developments, the meetings should not take place after the school break. The first meeting on this case took place the Monday after school break.

She is a huge fan of transit oriented developments. She lived in Boston very close to transportation. How is more transit oriented development built? Her concern is that 1.65 parking spaces is too much per dwelling unit. She looked online. The idea

of a transit oriented development is to decrease car usage. The project is across from the Metra station. She talked about an Evanston study and .94 parking spaces per unit at peak demand. What was recently approved in Evanston ranged .7 to 1.15. The average there is 1.19 spaces per dwelling unit and that is in a transit oriented development.

Her family is going towards biking. She has one car. Uber and bikes are coming. Her concern is that residents would put their bikes in a little room after they drive down the alley. There is not enough bike storage. She said maybe they could use some of the 1.65 spaces/unit for more bike storage or for an on-site bike station.

The Green Bay Road bike racks don't look like much. She is concerned. She is looking at the future and where all of this is going. An oversupply of parking encourages auto use. This is from the RTA and their maximum spaces/unit is 1.5. There are 23 public spaces. That is not necessary.

What will people see when they look into the units from the Metra station?

- 4.25 Susan Karol, 712 Park Avenue, said they looked at her backyards during site line studies. The line of site slide that was up when looking from the rooftop impacts her and her neighbors in the townhomes and on Park Ave.

She appreciates the line of site from the roof for those of them that are to the direct west, she is assuming that there are residences six floors above there. They will have windows and/or balconies. This was not referenced in the line of site slide was that those people are likely going to glance out their windows and/or sit on their balconies. They would also have line of site. Therefore, they would look directly into her home and other homes and backyards. That was not referenced in the line of site. This should be part of tonight's discussion.

- 4.26 Paul Doty, 1924 Lake Avenue, and Amanda Nugent, 500 Lake Avenue, said they are coming to lend their support and appreciation to the efforts that Optima is making towards remediation for bird strikes. It makes a difference in the community. Bird strikes are the third leading cause of mortality in birds. Optima is doing the work voluntarily and at some cost. They want to acknowledge their effort and is reflective of Wilmette values. Mr. Doty said that he and Ms. Nugent have volunteered in turning people onto birds and showing people the wildlife in the village. He learned from taking people out that there is a big segment of the population that values a commitment to maintaining habitat and wildlife within the village. He said to Mr. Segal that he (Mr. Doty) does not know the value of improvements being made but by doing this, Optima is setting an example to be a leader and will reflect the values of the community. He ended by thanking Optima.
- 4.27 Chairman Bradford said there was communication from the ARC expressing concerns about birds. He has done research and said that the Chicago metro area is one of the hot spots for the number of bird deaths from striking buildings.

- 4.28 Ms. Nugent said that being along the lake puts the village in a migratory path. With the creation of the bird sanctuary at Gilson Park, there is a unique opportunity to invest in the commitment to sustainability and being a habitat friendly place.
- 4.29 Barbra Bischoff Kleeman, 1223 Washington Avenue, said that she lives in the house all the way down the alley at the north end. She thanked Optima for the work that they did after listening to comments. She had three items that she thought there would be discussion on. Edgewater Beach has a pool underneath. Has there been a thought to relocating the pool down below the residential areas? The bulk of the building is still too large. Regarding cumulative impact of traffic on the alley, they know that is a problem. Is making it one way southbound under consideration? Once you add in the Imperial Motors piece, they will have created a street. She still is envisioning the green roof idea.
- 4.30 Chairman Bradford said that he understands that the village's traffic consultant is at the hearing and Mr. Adler said that they were at the meeting.

Chairman Bradford asked if they would address the issue of traffic in the alley.

- 4.31 Dan Manis Village Engineer, introduced Peter Lemmon, Kimley Horn Associates, who is the professional traffic operations engineer that the village hired to review the traffic study for this development.

Mr. Lemmon said he reviewed the traffic study prepared by the applicants. At the last meeting, there was talk about his firm reviewing the study, but they had no significant comments or changes in terms of methodology or data collected. He will now talk about the question about whether the alley should be one-way or two-way and if one-way, which direction?

The proposal is to keep the alley as a two-way alley serving adjacent residences and businesses. The purpose of an alley is for loading access, parking, service and things like that and this is consistent with the applicant's plan. He would hesitate to want to make a one-way alley. Other consequences could occur if they did that. One thing to consider if they are worried about an increase in alley activity to the north, traffic could be oriented as they are leaving the garage and go towards the south. There is not a lot of advantage to want to go north and exit to the north. If they were looking to apply a change or restriction that would be one that would be worth considering.

- 4.32 Ms. Bischoff Kleeman asked about his recommendations for implementing his suggestion.

Mr. Lemmon said there is not a good opportunity to physically deflect traffic to the south. Signage, primarily, would be his suggestion. Hopefully enforcement would not be an issue. The applicant can work with vendors regarding loading activity like

trucks. He said that there might not be a good way to do a half pork chop. The quickest way out of the parking garage is to go south to Central.

- 4.33 Commissioner Sheperd said they were told that the alley is wide enough. How much is it wide enough for the traffic? Is it barely wide enough?

Mr. Lemmon said that the alley is 20' and wider on the south end. It can handle two-way traffic particularly on the south end. When there is a lot of traffic in alleys, if there are utility poles and/or dumpsters that could reduce the alley width.

Commissioner Sheperd asked if 18' wide would be too small.

Mr. Lemon said that most Chicago alleys are 16-18'. 20' on the south portion is wide enough. There are two-10' travel lanes, which is plenty wide for two-way traffic.

Commissioner Schwab asked about alley obstructions.

Mr. Lemmon said they are more to the north. The older buildings do not have alcoves and insets for dumpsters on the north end. From the parking entrance to the south is pretty clear.

- 4.34 Joel Lunkas, 811 Park Avenue, thanked the commissioners for their service to the community. They are stewards of the community. He is dismayed at the position they are put in. Back in January 2011, his neighbor who is an architect, talked about the master plan. That master plan talked about the PUD. Building heights were set. There were guidelines for a streetscape running all the way down Green Bay Road. It talked somewhat about appearances and having cornices and breaking a building up into three sections. That was embodied on 4/1/14 in the zoning ordinance.

He is dismayed because he said, "we are nibbling around the edges." There is a building that is 20% higher than is called for. The Master Plan talked about developing properties and they mentioned the auto complex around the village pantry, auto care and the lot behind it. They talked about available land that could be developed into transit-oriented housing.

At 611 Green Bay, there are about 75 units. As a village, it was agreed to waive the plan and approve those variances. Now Optima is here, and he is not sure how it got this far. They are proposing a gross expansion of what is allowed. He has not heard any convincing reasons from the applicants as to why it is appropriate. One way to avoid birds being killed is to reduce the building by 20% back to the height it should be.

As stewards of our community, he asked the Plan Commission to think about their vision for the village's future. They are reviewing the proposal with blinders on. Nibbling around the edges to get concessions for the public benefit and he is

worried that if this is approved a precedent will be set. And then what is approved for this applicant is the norm. He would think that commissioners would follow the blueprint of the comprehensive plan. He appreciates their thoughtful response as to why they are considering the variances. How will variances be addressed when the next person comes in?

His final comment is that they could face the light well west. His understanding is that Optima tried to buy the Imperial Motors site and they had a four-story building within zoning on the north side and a two story where the bank is located. They failed to secure the property, so they now come in with tonight's plan. Will we wake up in three years when Optima buys Imperial Motors and there is a twin tower to the north? There is a zoning ordinance and a master plan to try to maintain the village's integrity. To look at this building without taking the Imperial Motors site into account is short sighted. The commissioners owe the community a position on this before it is approved so the community knows what is going to happen and how the plan commission will react to the next developer. He has not heard anyone argue why this gross overbuilding is in the village's best interest.

- 4.35 Julie Nelson, 714 Elmwood Avenue, talked about a friend who moved to the village and was a developer in Colorado and was shocked that the master plan was developed yet they are still considering these variances. Wilmette can do better. What is the point of having a master plan if a developer comes in and the plan is thrown in the trash? She encourages the commissioners and village board of trustees to maintain the spirit of the master plan.
- 4.36 Jeff Axelrod, 631 Central Avenue, said he is part of the Wilmette Justice Team. He recognizes that Optima decided not to include on-site affordable housing. But he and the Team believe that the public benefit would be much stronger with on-site units than with Optima partially funding the land trust program. The building is a great opportunity. If there were affordable units on site, residents could live with no car or one car. He asked the commissioners to request that Optima come back with a new plan that includes affordable units on site.
- 4.37 Beth Drucker, Go Green Wilmette, read a brief letter from the board of Go Green Wilmette, in summary, they support Optima's efforts in this area. They appreciate their commitment to incorporate bird friendly features in the building design to reduce bird injuries and deaths. They support additional bird friendly design features. They are pleased that Optima and Wilmette will be leaders in this effort to develop a bird friendly building that will serve as a model for other developments and other communities. Their endorsement of the bird friendly features is based on the assumption that these features will be included in the final building plans.
- 4.38 Delia Conache, 747 Lavergne Avenue, is not directly impacted by the development. She has three questions. The first involves parking on the site. Metra parking is limited. Has there been any consideration given to Optima offering more Metra

parking on the site? It is a unique opportunity to offer parking on the west side of Green Bay Road, so people don't have to cross the tracks.

Chairman Bradford said that the discussions taking place to date is that a portion of the proposed parking is for the public. The intent is that parking duration is limited to two hours to avoid commuters from parking there.

Ms. Conache asked if there was consideration for day long parking.

Chairman Bradford said that was not discussed to date.

Her second question is the type of retail being considered for the ground floor. She knows that a lot of young parents would like a day care on the site due to the proximity of Metra.

She said that Optima is a reputable developer and they hold onto their buildings. They have a unique model. The building needs to make financial sense to be built. She is sure that proposed height increases are due to this. If the building goes to 52' plus the parapets it might not be built.

- 4.39 Chairman Bradford said he knows from experience with designing early childhood centers, there are outdoor space requirements. With constraints of the site, daycare is probably not the best option. He agrees that having available daycare convenient to Metra or the VC would be great.
- 4.40 April Cesaretti, 935 Oakwood Avenue, said she is a ten-year village resident. Ugly, site pollution, uncharacteristic, too big, too tall. She said that appearance is not within the purview of the Plan Commission because that will be discussed at the Village Board level.

Regarding the overall look that the village wants to go towards with its architectural style of different buildings, this is a 100+ year old historic North Shore town. Charming, Main Street, small town charm feel. This building does not bring those things to mind.

According to the VC master plan, it was recommended that a more comprehensive set of design guidelines should be developed to supplement the VC master plan recommendations. Were those guidelines developed? If developers come in with varying degrees of what they think is a good idea, there will be a Hodge podge of styles.

According to the VC master plan, many of the recommendations for future developments are not apparent in this proposal. Is there a consideration of what else is being built on Green Bay Road is supposed to be? What is the plan for Green Bay Road? The other six story building built on Green Bay Road is too tall and too massive for the location and the ambiance of the village. That building should not

be set as a model for things to come on Green Bay Road. Something should be learned from that mistake of approving the building and not doing it again.

- 4.41 Alexandra Cole, 1046 Linden Avenue, has lived in her home for 36+ years. She sees things that are built of right that are in her opinion ugly, intrusive, and massive. She lives in one of the oldest homes in the village. She loves the village. She loves contemporary architecture. A beautiful community can have a lot of structures with different designs. It is not appropriate for the village to dictate design. The ARC can only do certain things and they have nothing to say if someone can build something of right. She appreciated the shadow study and other information that showed that if Optima was not asking for any exceptions, there would be no say on many elements. People look in her backyard now from other sites. She has not found it intrusive. There are things that worked and did not work in the master plan. She has seen many things that were built right and did not go through this kind of review. People come to the meetings with objections because this is their forum. It's nice when people say the proposal is really good for the village. She likes Optima's idea about contributing to affordable housing.
- 4.42 Andrew Gustafson, 720 Park Avenue, said he spoke at the January meeting. He will not repeat those comments.

Chairman Bradford noted that Mr. Gustafson sent a letter that is part of the packet.

Mr. Gustafson said he wanted to speak for people who are not at the meeting. Neighbors in the townhomes and single-family homes next to the townhomes drafted a petition saying they objected to the size and scale of the development and encouraged commissioners to ensure that the development is within the zoning ordinance and more in line with the master plan. To get support for that petition and bring awareness about the project to the residents, they created a survey about the project. Most of the people they talked to have no idea about the project. They got 160 residents to support the petition. 200 households total completed the survey. He shared some results so their voices can be heard. Not all can attend the meetings.

They asked a few simple questions and about 1/3 of the residents had no idea about the project. About 50% were underinformed of the development. About 90% of the residents believe that the village has not done enough to educate people about the development. Less than 10% supported the development as is. About 87% felt it was too large and 75% felt it was too large and they did not like the aesthetics of the building. Most of the respondents encouraged the village to stick closer to the master plan in looking at this building. It is important to note that the 12 neighbors who supported the petition were directly impacted by the building with regard to privacy. One neighbor said that there is more to this building than the size, scale and shadow study.

Most who responded are not directly impacted by the building, but most objected to the size and scale for reasons that others pointed out at the hearings. Mostly it

relates to the small look and feel of the town and the impact on the perception of what the building will have on the village. People commented about looking at what was proposed for this site by the master plan compared to what is proposed.

There has been talk about public benefits. They asked people who responded to the survey about whether they thought the public benefits proposed presented a benefit to the respondent. Public benefits had already been explained. 82% of respondents did not see any benefits to them. 10% said they represented somewhat of a benefit but not enough to support the exemptions. 8% thought that there would be an actual benefit to them.

In conclusion, he wanted to ensure that the voices of survey respondents were heard. He encouraged commissioners to read the comments and the summary. The survey represents voices of people in the community.

- 4.43 Chairman Bradford said that the summary was received. He appreciates the efforts to collect the information. It will be beneficial during the discussion.

Chairman Bradford closed the public comment portion of the hearing. He will give the applicant approximately 30 minutes to respond to comments.

## **5.0 VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE PLAN COMMISSION**

- 5.10 Chairman Bradford asked for a motion on the case.
- 5.11 Commissioner Head moved to recommend approval of a PUD preliminary plan and special use to permit the construction of a mixed use building containing commercial space and approximately 109 dwelling units located in the VC zoning district pedestrian commercial west at 1210 Central in conformance with the plans submitted. The use shall run with the use.
- 5.12 Commissioner Schwab seconded the motion. Chairman Bradford said that the motion can be amended at any point before the actual vote.

### **Discussion**

- 5.13 Commissioner Sheperd referenced the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan and was furthering those goals and policies a possible public benefit. How much are people weighing goals such as having a vibrant commercial area as a benefit? He is wrestling with this. Is it a benefit vs. the exemptions being asked for?

Mr. Adler said he would speak about other approved PUDs. A hotel was approved along the expressway. The economic benefit of the hotel was deemed to be a significant public benefit during the recession. There was no hotel in the village and having one was important. On 611 Green Bay Road, they were coming out of a recession. Land in the VC had negative residual land value. The idea of

development in the VC was seen as a public benefit at that time. The commissioners have to decide how they feel about the stated public benefits related to tonight's project at this particular time. Artis memory care was a recent PUD. That approval had more to do with the fact that there was a shopping center that would most likely not be successful as retail center and the proposed use was providing memory care for 64 households. This was deemed as something desired for the village. That was part of their public benefit. They also had a provision for funding affordable housing. HODC got approval for 16 units of affordable housing. The public benefit in that case was straight forward.

- 5.14 Commissioner DiGrino said she had a perspective on the specific question posed above whether the applicant's recitation of how the project advances the goals and policies of the comprehensive and master plans and whether this is a public benefit. She views those less as public benefits as more as factors that help the commissioners evaluate whether the relief they are seeking meets the spirit of the law. She does not put them in the strong public benefit category.
- 5.15 Commissioner Head said he compared this site, which is as close to a premier site in the VC for a market rate development, to several projects that have the inherent benefit within their use. He talked about affordable housing and the memory care center. He thinks that the proposal is an attractive development that fulfills the core goals of the master plan, which is designed to bring people into the center, walkable distance to the downtown. He looks at the benefits and see a lot of things called benefits that are really de facto requirements or de facto expectations of the market for a development this size and quality in a town of this type. He talked about the level 2 Green Globes as a public benefit and it's not a public benefit, but it is the state of the art for doing a high-quality building. He congratulates the developer on the bird friendly design. He struggles with how a development that builds on 100% of the site has storm water management as a public benefit vs. a requirement. A garage that serves retail is a project benefit. Advancing the goals of the comprehensive plan is part of advancing and moving the project forward. He continues to be concerned about the idea that there is a contribution for affordable housing vs. accommodating the housing within the development where the developer has the control and ability to do this. He said that the donation is commendable and there have been no other donations like this. He asked the developer to reconsider the allocation of that donation to be within the development. His perspective is that it changes on a site by site basis. This is a premier site and the front door to the village. There is a higher standard for this type of site.
- 5.16 Commissioner Sheperd asked if anybody had an opinion on why after such a long period of economic expansion the International Bank property is still such an underutilized site.

Mr. Adler said it has to do with having a willing seller, a seller that came to an understanding with a buyer to sell the property for a certain amount of money that

would get them to give up the site. There are a lot of properties like that in the village. Chase Bank is one of the biggest sites with redevelopment potential. Rumors were they wanted to redevelop that site but that is not what has happened. The village does not control when a property will sell.

- 5.17 Chairman Bradford said that the same thing is true with the Imperial Motors site. There has to be willingness by the current owner to move forward.

Mr. Adler said a lot of people contacted the village about Imperial Motors.

- 5.18 Commissioner DiGrino asked when the Imperial Motors site was vacated.

Mr. Adler did not know the exact date, but it was a couple of years ago. Mr. Stein said it was definitely with the last three years.

Commissioner DiGrino said she thought that it had been a lot longer.

- 5.19 Commissioner Sheperd referenced the line of sight issue. Was the applicant saying that we are better off with a 62' building with balconies vs. 52' because they are doing a setback that is not by right that they don't have to do. What is the program on the as of right building roof?

- 5.20 Mr. Segal said that this would dictate whether there is the same ability to be on the western edge of that as of right roof and be able to have the line of site both ways. The comparison would be to someone being at their window at the top floor of their building vs. being on the roof of the as of right building.

- 5.21 Chairman Bradford said that whether it is 52' or 62' someone who is in the building has views west that goes over adjacent properties.

- 5.22 Chairman Bradford asked for comments on the height.

- 5.23 Commissioner Ghaemi said that her only issue with that is that there are rules, regulations and ordinances written and at what point does the commission take them as they are? She loves Optima's designs and that it matches her taste. She is trying to put her personal views aside. The master plan did not dictate appearance, but it has things in it for guidance. It dictates what the height needs to be and that is being ignored. Where do we stop?

- 5.24 Commissioner Head said it ties back to the public benefit. There is a request for substantial relief, a 20% height variance and he is not sure about the FAR variance. With substantial public benefit, there is reason to consider the requests. That is why they are commissioners – to weigh the public benefit against the zoning change.

Mr. Adler said that there is no FAR variation for this development.

- 5.25 Commissioner Head reiterated they are asking for 20% relief on height. What is the public benefit?
- 5.26 Commissioner Ghaemi said that they were talking about height, but the requests all add up. She agrees that low income housing should be part of the development. Once it is outside the building, the commission no longer has control. She has said that low income housing needs to be mixed with other housing.
- 5.27 Commissioner DiGrino said she cannot think about the height in isolation. One has to look at the entirety of the development and what is being proposed and weigh that against the public benefit. She does not see the public benefits being offered as being sufficient to justify the extent of the entire package of relief they are seeking. It is the height, it is the massing, the Central Street frontage, orientation – she has to look at this together vs. height in isolation.
- 5.28 Chairman Bradford said he is not suggesting that the height be viewed as a single entity, but it is an issue that has been talked around and he wants to get it on the table for discussion.
- 5.29 Commissioner Head said that he agrees that there is not much difference between 52' and 62' with regards to line of sight. He understands that people who live there have issues. They would have an issue regardless. The ordinance is saying that something is the limit.
- 5.30 Chairman Bradford said that the line of sight studies were justifying the fact that they were going up to 72' and 79' with the amenities penthouse and elevator overrun. That is assuming that the applicant got 62'. What they are putting on top of the roof is not visible, so it does not factor in. The difference in perception of the building on Green Bay Road between 52' and 62' is substantial.
- 5.31 Commissioner DiGrino said that is a fair point that one cannot assume that an as of right project would just be a box. One would not build that. The line of site study is not an accurate representation.
- 5.32 Chairman Bradford likes the building design in general. He likes the design of most of Optima's projects. Probably his least favorite is the one on Green Bay Road in Winnetka. He likes Optima's clean line design. He is concerned about the height and the massing.
- 5.33 Commissioner Schwab asked to talk about the public benefit again. He thinks that the affordable housing donation is being discounted. How many affordable housing units would be in the building if they were to follow the affordable housing plan recommendations?

Mr. Adler said it would be 16.

Commissioner Schwab continued and said that they are talking about a \$1.6M donation, which would equal 14 units. That is two units short of the recommendation. It is his understanding that affordable housing recommendations do not mean that the units must be in the building. To discount the \$1.6M is short sighted. There are 14 units that could be allocated to people who need the units and these units are not there today. That is a public benefit period. It is just a matter of weighing the benefit.

- 5.34 Commissioner Head said he would agree about the public benefit if the units could be built. He said to take those dollars and look at the cost of a vacant lot in the village. What does a low-price building cost? The reality of turning those dollars into units when there is not an internal infrastructure within the village to help manage the funds is not high.
- 5.35 Commissioner Schwab said that is what the nonprofit entity does. That is their goal, that is what they do.
- 5.36 Mr. Segal said that they are not just writing a check. They found an organization, and this is what they do all along the North Shore. This creates an opportunity for their programming and to create affordable housing in the village in a way that provides sustainable affordable housing through the Land Trust structure. Part of this is being funded by Wilmette residents who are out of town tonight. They are Elissa Morgante and Fred Wilson, who is on the board of CPAH. As they disclosed at the prior meeting, they formed a foundation to support affordable housing in Wilmette going forward. If someone wants to hear more about what CPAH does, they can walk through the presentation that was earlier provided.
- 5.37 Chairman Bradford said the floor is not being opened back up again.
- 5.38 Commissioner Head said that they are talking about 14 units. He asked the applicant if they could build the development with 16 affordable housing units within the development.
- 5.39 Mr. Segal said that they could not.
- 5.40 Commissioner Head said he is not suggesting 16 but is suggesting a number that is a residual of the \$1.6M commitment and any additional commitment. They could agree on a number of units that would work within the development at the contribution level Optima has proposed and any other funds that could be raised that would still allow the development to move forward while at the same time knowing that the development goes forward and creates the units. He works in the affordable housing business. It is a difficult business. In Chicago it is difficult. In the village it is not an easy prospect and he is not confident that \$1.6M, though well intentioned and appreciated, turns into units the way it is proposed. The dollars are not necessarily able to be used for the intended purpose.

- 5.41 Chairman Bradford told the applicant that they have closed the discussion and said it is up to the board to discuss the issues now.
- 5.42 Commissioner DiGrino wanted to clarify that she didn't discount what the applicant is proposing about affordable housing. It is an incredible contribution – not only the dollar amount but they came with a proposed solution and are partnering with an amazing organization. The proposed model is great. For her, she looks at the list of public benefits and when the ones that are stripped away that are necessary for the price of admission or self-serving, she is left with a bird friendly design and the affordable housing donation. It is not enough to justify the significant amount of relief that the applicant is requesting. The commission is being asked to balance a policy decision in favor of affordable housing, but it requires them to ignore all else. She is saying that there has to be something more. If you want to over build height, over build mass, shrink the first floor, include ground floor dwelling units, and overbuild parking for a TOD development, you have to come with reasons why that is going to produce an overall better outcome and she is not convinced.
- 5.43 Commissioner Schwab said he also circled the same two public benefit discussed above and those are the only two he could find.
- 5.44 Commissioner Sheperd said that the height increase of 10' is the big ask.
- 5.45 Commissioner Schwab agreed that the majority of concern was over the height.
- 5.46 Commissioner DiGrino said she likes the design. Somebody at the ARC said that there are a variety of designs in the village and that is a positive.
- 5.47 Chairman Bradford recommended that certain conditions be added to the motion to codify what the applicant has committed to do as per the presentation. The approval is based on meeting promises. The first one is a condition to meet a minimum of two Green Globe standards and the second is a condition regarding parking with 23 onsite spaces for public use, limited to no more than two hours of use. The third is to condition approval on the \$1.6M donation and the fourth is for the incorporation of bird friendly glass on the lower three floors of the building.
- 5.48 Mr. Stein said if the motion was done in conjunction with plans as submitted and presented it would cover all that.
- 5.49 Chairman Bradford said he wants to ensure that what Optima said they would do is to be part of the approval process.
- 5.50 Mr. Stein said that plans as presented and as provided in the application should suffice but if the conditions altered that, then those would be appropriate conditions.
- 5.51 Mr. Stein said he is certain that the applicant would agree to the approval being for the plans as presented. Mr. Segal answered yes.

- 5.52 Mr. Segal referenced public parking and two electrical charging stations which would be for general public use. It is open to anyone and everyone in the village for use. They could have taken the approach to make it dedicated for retail customers, only people who patronize their building, but they have specifically designed the garage to be accessible to anyone for their use. He spoke with someone at the library who told him that when the library has evening programming, they run out of parking and their patrons could use the proposed parking for evening programming. He said that if having parking stimulates more business in the village, then it is a bigger benefit to have unrestricted public parking at their building.
- 5.53 Commissioner Sheperd said a lot has been said about setting precedent. If they said no to everything for a future development, would they be putting themselves in an awkward position?
- 5.54 Mr. Stein said that every case is unique. If this exact project came in with the exact property surrounding it, there would be a good argument for precedent. Not every property will have residential behind it or a different building height adjacent to it. What is taken into account today will not necessarily translate to the next application.
- 5.55 Commissioner Sheperd asked if other commissioners thought that the accommodations being made to enhance the village will be good for property values in the area or have no impact or have a negative impact.
- 5.56 Commissioner Taylor asked whether he meant residential or commercial property. Commissioner Sheperd answered both.
- 5.57 Chairman Bradford said he thinks that there is a positive benefit for the village with increase in housing opportunities, increase in retail space. From a vitalization standpoint, it is beneficial. On Green Bay Road right now, it is very porous. This development proposal helps eliminate a lot of open surface parking lot and helps to reinforce the street edge and that helps to create a stronger street presence for the village along Green Bay Road.
- 5.58 Commissioner Head agreed with the above comments. This could be a very good development for the village, but he would rather than move to approve with conditions, have the developer take another look at the public benefits and return for a third meeting. A number of questions were raised about public benefits. Ideas were discussed and where benefits are lacking was pointed out. He asked that the developer consider taking another look at public benefits and return to another meeting. All seem to be in agreement that the building in general meets the goals of the master plan and would be a positive addition. But most commissioners have said that the benefit relative to the relief seems mismatched.

- 5.59 Commissioner DiGrino said she concurred with Commissioner Head's comments.
- 5.60 Chairman Bradford asked for a motion to continue the case.
- 5.61 Commissioner Taylor asked what does motion to continue mean as he does not concur with continuing. There have been two meetings. There is still a village board meeting. That is the third meeting.
- 5.62 Mr. Stein said that currently the motion is to approve as submitted by plans and as presented. There are no additional conditions on that motion. If there is a subsequent motion to continue, the applicant would need to be agreeable. The applicant can ask for a vote tonight. If a third meeting is not beneficial to the commission let's not waste time and effort. But if it is at all beneficial then continue the case.
- 5.63 Chairman Bradford noted that to get an affirmative recommendation to the village board they need four yes votes. If it goes to the village board without a positive recommendation, then it takes a super majority of the village board for approval.
- 5.64 Commissioner Ghaemi suggested asking the applicant if they were willing to return.
- 5.65 Chairman Bradford said that based on the discussion about public amenities and benefits, does the applicant see an opportunity to alter the proposal to increase the benefits.
- 5.66 Mr. Segal answered no.

**6.0 DECISION**

6.1 Commissioner Head moved to recommend approval of the request for a Planned Unit Development Preliminary Plan and Special Use to permit the construction of a mixed use building containing commercial space and approximately 109 dwelling units located in the VC, Village Center, zoning district - Pedestrian Commercial West at 1210 Central Avenue, in conformance with the plans submitted. The use to run with the use.

6.11 Commissioner Schwab seconded the motion.

6.12 The vote was as follows:

Charmain Bradford	No
Mariah DiGrino	No
Homa Ghaemi	No
Jeffrey Head	No
Steven Schwab	Yes

Justin Sheperd  
Michael Taylor

No  
Yes

Motion failed

Chairman Bradford said that is a negative recommendation and the Village Board will meet on February 25, 2020 to receive the recommendation.

## **7.0 FINDINGS OF FACT UPON WHICH THE DECISION WAS BASED**

The majority of the Plan Commission felt that the standards for a Planned Unit Development were not met as the proposed public benefits were not significant enough to warrant granting the relief being requested. If no additional public benefit is possible, the lowering of the height of the building would bring the requested relief more in line with the proposed benefits.

A minority of the Plan Commission felt that the standards for a Planned Unit Development were met. Because the proposed structure's impact on neighboring properties is not demonstrably greater than the impact of a conforming structure, the public benefit was seen as significant, thus justifying the additional building height.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

The Plan Commission recommends denial of the request for a Planned Unit Development Preliminary Plan and Special Use to permit the construction of a mixed use building containing commercial space and approximately 109 dwelling units located in the VC, Village Center, zoning district - Pedestrian Commercial West at 1210 Central Avenue, in conformance with the plans submitted. The use to run with the use.