

Mid-North Association

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February 12, 2010

Hon. Vi Daley
Alderman, 43rd Ward
735 West Wrightwood
Chicago, Illinois 60614

Re: Opposition to Supera-Zisook Plan to
Redevelop Lincoln Park Hospital Site
(including Garage)

Dear Vi:

As we previously advised you by e-mail, the Board of Directors of Mid-North Association voted to oppose Supera and Zisook's latest plan for the proposed re-development of the Lincoln Park Hospital site (including the garage), as presented at the last community meeting, at Lincoln Park High School.

Mid-North Association and its members have many reasons to oppose this project, as do the majority of residents of the neighborhood. You've heard all those reasons many times at many meetings, large and small, over the last few months, so I won't repeat all of them. Those things that appear to concern our members and neighbors the most include (but are not necessarily limited to) the following:

New Retail and Office Use in a Residential Neighborhood

The Mid-North neighborhood is primarily a residential neighborhood, with retail and business uses located almost exclusively on commercial streets (e.g., Lincoln, Clark, Fullerton, Armitage). Back in the horse-and-buggy days, people had ice boxes, 25-50 pound blocks of ice were delivered several times a week, and they shopped every day at the corner grocery store. However, all that changed, and the trend for many years has been away from retail and business uses in our neighborhood, and towards residential uses. For example, the following locations (including several hospitals) which were historically retail or business uses, are now residential:

Former Hospitals
Augustana Hospital
Roosevelt Hospital

Webster

514 W. Webster (west of alley; store)
SE corner of Webster & Cleveland (offices)
NW corner of Webster & Burling (hot dog stand)

Grant Place

Contemporary Art Workshop (dairy)
Channel 44 Studios (TV station)
SE corner of Grant & Cleveland (stable)

Dickens

NW corner of Dickens & Sedgwick (DCFS)

Geneva Terrace

2312 N. Geneva (little school store)
NW corner of Geneva & Kemper (ambulance garage)
2317 N. Geneva (north side of alley; store)
2333 N. Geneva (ice cream store)

Simple math tells us that the 42,000 sq. ft. of retail and office use now being proposed equals in size a total of 13-1/2 average size (*i.e.*, 25' x 125') neighborhood lots -- which is just about the same total size as all of the lots mentioned immediately above (excluding the hospitals). The message is clear: the neighborhood does not want additional retail or office use in Mid-North.

Increased Traffic & Congestion

The standard for traffic comparisons should be the prior, *unsuccessful* use of Lincoln Park Hospital and Grant Hospital, and should *not* be based on questionable projections for some *hypothetical*, thriving, efficient, fully-occupied 500-bed hospital. Both Grant and Lincoln Park Hospitals struggled to keep even 100 beds occupied and closed due to lack of patients. Compared to the relatively small utilization of the hospital (under either name) during the last 10-20 years, the proposed retail, office, condominium, townhouse and senior housing uses will generate much more traffic and add to the congestion far more than what the unsuccessful hospital ever did. There are also serious questions about all that traffic being funneled into and exiting from multiple driveways on Webster.

Parking

The proposed plan would eliminate many parking spaces in the existing garage, which is not a good thing. In addition, shoppers and visitors, by nature, will first try to find parking on the street, which will exacerbate an already difficult parking situation in the neighborhood.

Height of Hospital Tower and Garage

The planned development Ordinance allowed construction of the hospital tower for hospital use -- not for condominiums. The "bonus" was not intended to be carried over to any other unrelated use. Indeed, any change in use of the site will require action (in the nature of a rezoning) by the Chicago City Counsel to amend the existing Ordinance, and no one is "entitled" to have their property rezoned. The overwhelming response of the neighbors, and the spirit if not the letter of the 1980 agreement with the neighbors and Mid-North Association, is that any future use of the site should be in conformity with RM-5 zoning characteristics, including (but not limited to) height restrictions .

The developers' proposal calls for installing new walls around the perimeter of the existing garage, which would be approximately four feet higher than the height of the existing parapet walls. There has also been a proposal to allow parking on the roof of the garage. Limits on the height of the garage and prohibitions against parking on the roof were both things that Mid-North Association and the neighbors fought for and obtained in prior litigation with the Hospital, and were both included in prior settlement agreements. Neither increasing the height of the garage walls nor parking on the roof should be permitted.

Green Space/Open Space

At present, the landscaped lot immediately to the west of Andy Robertson's house (516 W. Webster) and the driveway to the west of that lot, are open space and form a buffer between the Hospital tower and adjacent residences. The proposed redevelopment would instead put two new houses and garages on what are presently open lands. It should be noted that the loss of open space between the Robertson house and the Hospital will barely be matched, if at all, by the total area of the proposed set-back (from the sidewalk) of the proposed new building(s) on the south side of Grant Place. Please also note that the "green space" which the developers tout as adding to the existing green space in the neighborhood, will (a) be surrounded on all four sides by multi-story buildings, (b) be invisible to the neighborhood, and (c) benefit only the occupants of the proposed new and revised buildings on the Hospital site.

Moreover, the 1972 and 1986 Agreements between the Hospital, the neighbors and Mid-North Association required that the green space next to the Robertson house, and the open space comprised by the driveway to the west of the green space, both be maintained in perpetuity.

Settlement Agreements

The developers would ignore both the letter and spirit of the several settlement agreements which were forged out after prolonged litigation on prior occasions. Andy Robertson and others have furnished to you the details of those agreements, and we have touched on some, so we need not repeat all their terms in this letter. However, we do want to remind you that the 1980 agreement provides that any future expansion should be consistent with the character of the surrounding residential neighborhood and then R-5 (now RM-5) zoning. We are pleased that you have said those agreements should be observed going forward.

Now What?

The developers have stated that *if* the proposed redevelopment plans for the Hospital and garage are not approved, then either (a) the property will once again be used as a hospital, with all the attending traffic, or (b) it could sit vacant for years.

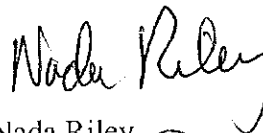
The last two hospitals operating at this site went out of business due to lack of patients (e.g., Lincoln Park Hospital reported a net operating *loss* of \$3,260,000+ for the year 2008) and it does not appear that there is a long line of proposed new hospitals clamoring to open up at this site. Further, in order to either re-open or remodel the existing hospital space, the operator would have to obtain a "certificate of necessity" and comply with many other regulations, which will not be easy.

As for the property sitting vacant for years, given its location and value, free market economics dictate that *if* the present owner does not will find another use which is in keeping with the RM-5 character of Mid-North and acceptable to the neighborhood, the property will either be (a) sold to another developer, who will find another use for it which is in keeping with the RM-5 character of the neighborhood, or (b) demolished and developed for residential uses, such as townhouses (like Augustana and Roosevelt Hospitals). Furthermore, there are City Ordinances dealing with "abandoned" properties and which forbid the owner from allowing it to become derelict.

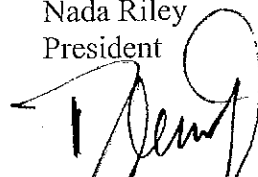
You and the Mid-North Association have heard all of these complaints/concerns many times from a multitude of neighbors. We implore you to continue to listen to the voices of the neighbors, who overwhelmingly oppose the Supera-Zisook redevelopment plan as proposed, and are justifiably concerned about the effects such plan would have on the neighbors and neighborhood.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours very truly,



Nada Riley
President



David S. Chernoff
Planning Chair