

## CAC poses: When did City Hall first contemplate Addison Street Project?

The question is not rhetorical. When did a project pitched as relief of downtown parking turn into an incentive program for private interests? The answer relates to the capacity of Elmhurst residents to have their voice heard, and my guess is that the contemplation began a lot earlier than the public learned of it.

The project already approved is four stories; first floor retail, second through fourth floor public parking, and approximate City cost of \$12.5 million dollars. The revised proposed project is six stories; first floor retail, second and third floor office space; a possible fourth floor office; fifth and sixth floors public parking; and, an approximate cost of \$14-16 million dollars to the City.

Here are a few more questions related to this complicated project:

- Why is the City in the mortgage lending business for private developers? If mortgage lending is a new incentive program, whom at City Hall should prospective homeowners contact to see if they qualify?

- A City consultant for Hahn St. reported that City Centre is flooded with vacant office space (more than 60,000 sq. ft. and a 20% vacancy rate). Why is building new office space even on the table?

- Closed-door audiotapes indicated that it will cost the City about \$2.8 million more to build two additional floors, for a net increase of about 100 evening public parking spots. The developer proposed to buy back the office space for about \$1 million, with themselves being the office tenant. How long will it take for the City to recoup the remaining \$1.8 million based on office employees and visitors buying lunch, staying in town, and paying office space property tax? How much additional foot traffic is anticipated from visitors to the office space's proposed athletic facility (i.e. two story basketball court) for weekly events that include, among other events, "Broker Basketball?"

The Elmhurst Zoning Commission heard over 3 hours of testimony from people opposed to 6-stories for a wide range

of reasons: height, setback, office space use, and concerns about why the City was not the applicant to name a few. We encourage the Zoning Commission to vote with those who cared enough to believe their participation will make a difference.

We also ask the City Council to reject the 6-story building. Legitimate questions were raised due to the commentary by several public officials in the closed session tapes, including Mayor-Elect Steve Morley, regarding the City Council's capacity to conduct a truly independent consideration of a larger structure. Confidence in the political process mandates the rejection of six stories on this project and a general overhaul for how the City currently balances the strong desire to promote economic development against a lukewarm interest in public engagement.

So City Hall - what's the answer to the question?

**Ms. Terry Pastika**  
**Executive Director/  
Community Lawyer**  
**Citizen Advocacy Center**

MAY 2, 2013

ELMHURST INDEPENDENT