
SYCAMORE PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 9, 2004

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman John Lewis called the meeting to order and City Clerk Candy Smith called the roll. Those Commissioners present were: George Bridgewater, Pat David, Ken George, Dave Hamilton, Cindy Henderson, Bill Lorence, Chuck Stowe, Larry Steczo and Chairperson John Lewis. Commissioners Tom Brotcke, Bill Davey and John McBride were absent. Other staff members present were City Manager Bill Nicklas, City Engineer John Brady, and Commission Attorney Kevin Buick.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 12, 2004.

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to approve the Minutes of January 12, 2004 and Commissioner Stowe seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairman Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 9 - 0.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion

Commissioner David moved to approve the agenda and Commissioner Bridgewater seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairman Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 9 - 0.

CONSIDERATIONS

A. Consideration of a Petition from Youssi Real Estate Developers for a Final Plat of River Edge Condominiums, Phase Two.

Manager Nicklas said this action is prompted from a previous request from the County Recorder's Office. He said that this action covers the remaining 23 buildings in the planned development by revising the final plat configuration.

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to approve a favorable recommendation and Commissioner George seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Chairman Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. George Bridgewater, Pat David, Ken George, Dave Hamilton, Cindy Henderson, Bill Lorence, Chuck Stowe, Larry Steczo and Chairperson John Lewis voted aye. Motion passed 9 - 0.

B. Consideration of a Petition from Roncon Development, LLC for an Amendment to the Annexation Agreement Between the City of Sycamore and John Ward for the Property at the Northwest Corner of Illinois Route 23, Peace Road and Plank Road.

Manager Nicklas explained that during the September workshop, it was recommended the developer expand the guest parking available to townhouse owners be at least .75 spaces per unit and to explore ways to connect residents to adjacent subdivision via bikepaths or walking paths. He listed the main features of the revised preliminary plat as follows:

- The development has a name: Camden Crossing.
- A reduced total of 183 housing units of all types, including 43 single-family detached units, 48 duplex units, and 92 townhomes.
- A density of 4.45 dwelling units per gross acre (6 units per acre is permitted).
- A total of 74 guest parking spaces in the townhouse area, or .8 guest spaces per townhouse.
- A larger public park dedication toward the north end of the plan, comprising 2.56 acres.
- A 10-foot wide pedestrian and bike path linking residents to the commercial frontage and future growth to the west.
- Privately owned and maintained roadways and parking areas within the townhouse area.

Mr. Nicklas said this plan provides less density and individual units than the original concept and complies with our codes and ordinances. He said a buffer is needed between the guest parking and the property line.

Ron Stonebreaker, President of RonCon Development, Elgin, said they tried to comply with the recommendations they were given in September. He said there is less total density, 3.89 acres of park area, 7.17 acres of open space, and 4.46 spaces for multi-family parking. He said that each of the 92 multi-family units will have 2-car garages, plus 2 spaces in their driveways, plus a total of 74 off street spaces. He said they added bike paths and provided access to the detention area and increased the green space. Mr. Stonebreaker said concerning buffering the parking, the adjacent commercial development has been raised with fill and a berm would have no affect. He said they will landscape. He said that since the property to the east of his project may have a higher-density zoning when developed, it is generally the developer with the higher density zoning who is responsible for the berms.

Chairperson Lewis asked for Plan Commission or audience comment.

Commissioner Lorence asked Commissioner David if she was satisfied with the plan. Commissioner David said she was concerned about the aesthetics and asked if 11 parking spaces could be eliminated to create a berm.

Mr. Stonebreaker said he thought there were plenty of stalls since they went to 2-car garages.

Chairperson Lewis said that as far as aesthetics the property to the east would probably be zoned commercial.

Aldersperson Stowe said to leave the parking as is and landscape the lot and work with the commercial when they come in.

Commissioner George said it looked basically like a berm landscape between stalls.

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to approve a favorable recommendation with landscaping between the parking stalls and Commissioner Hamilton seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Chairman Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. George Bridgewater, Pat David, Ken George, Dave Hamilton, Cindy Henderson, Bill Lorence, Chuck Stowe, Larry Steczo and Chairperson John Lewis voted aye. Motion passed 9 - 0.

C. Consideration of a Petition from John L. Castle Builders, LLC for a Final Plat of Heron Creek Townhomes P.U.D., Unit Two.

Manager Nicklas said the final plat pertains to the townhouse development that was described in a preliminary plat that came before the Commission on January 12 and was approved by the City Council on January 19, 2004. He said the 4.45 acres back up to a 7.5-acre townhome development that is also owned by Castle Builders. Mr. Nicklas said the developer has looped the roads and developed a plan that works with the adjacent subdivision.

Commissioner Lorence asked if he had provided glare screening for the future Airport Road extension.

John Castle, 1013 Fisk Road, Compton, IL, said he would certainly plant trees, but did not think there is room for a berm.

Motion

Commissioner David moved to approve a favorable recommendation and Commissioner George seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Chairman Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. George Bridgewater, Pat David, Ken George, Dave Hamilton, Cindy Henderson, Bill Lorence, Chuck Stowe, Larry Steczo and Chairperson John Lewis voted aye. Motion passed 9 - 0.

D. Consideration of a Petition from Bill Lathrop for a Zoning Change from "R-1" Single Family Residential to "R-2" Two Family Residential with a Special Use Permit for Two Common Wall Lots at 211 Stark Avenue.

Manager Nicklas said Mr. Lathrop wants to build an addition to the south of the existing building, creating a duplex housing unit with a common wall. He said that the property would have to be rezoned to R-2 and a special use permit would be required to allow the common wall construction.

Commissioner Lorence said he reviewed the site and spoke with neighbors who are concerned about drainage and parking.

Bill Lathrop, 511 S. Third Street, DeKalb, said he intends to provide a garage between the two units with a one car garage and parking in front of the garage. He plans to live on the property and has made many improvements and will improve the site further. He said he hopes the City will have a solution for the drainage. City Engineer Brady said there is a storm sewer on the lot and Mr. Lathrop could make a yard drain.

Annette Hallmayer, Grant Street, said the second property facing south faces a fence and Mr. Lathrop has removed all the landscaping from the north side. She said she thought the landscaping belonged to a neighbor. She was concerned her back yard has been shortened and is concerned about the surveys of the whole neighborhood. Ms. Hallmayer expressed concern about the possibility of a Section 8. She said the neighborhood is opposed to the rezoning.

Dave Benson, 1817 Somonauk Street, said he was there on behalf of his parents Harry and Dorothy Benson who live at 507 Center Avenue. He said they were concerned that Mr. Lathrop's roof would drain onto their property. He said they are pleased the property is being cleaned up, but feel that Mr. Lathrop is trying to cram too much in a small area.

Jerry Benson, Route 64, Clare, said he was representing his parents, Harry and Dorothy Benson, 507 Center Avenue. He said his parents' basement has flooded 2 or 3 times and they were concerned this proposal would add to the water problem. He said he was glad Lathrop's were cleaning up the property and a single-family dwelling was welcome.

Ann Bollinger, 510 Grant Street, said she was concerned that a multi-family dwelling is too large for a small lot.

Mr. Lathrop said he cut down trees that were on his property. He said his plans are not set in stone and he is considering options. He said he does not have the building configured yet and he is aware of the flooding issue.

Commissioner George asked if he is planning a 1 or 2-story. Mr. Lathrop said he will match the existing building and the set back and side yard meet code. Mr. Lathrop said he cut down trees because they were dangerous.

Commissioner Stowe asked if any other R-2 zoning was in the neighborhood and Zoning Officer Doty said multi-family is right across the street.

Commissioner David said it sounds like more questions than fixed answers. She said she was not seeing a strong argument for a duplex and she did not feel comfortable setting a precedent.

Mr. Lathrop said originally he wanted to build 2 separate houses, but the lot is too small. He has not made a final drawing and does not know how he will fix the water problem.

Commissioner Stowe said he thought this should be held over to get more answers from the petitioner.

Mr. Nicklas said it would be useful to see renderings of elevation of the site and get some answers to some of the questions.

Motion

Commissioner David moved to hold this item over until the March meeting in order to get more information and Commissioner Lorence seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Chairman Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. George Bridgewater, Pat David, Ken George, Dave Hamilton, Cindy Henderson, Bill Lorence, Chuck Stowe, Larry Steczo and Chairperson John Lewis voted aye. Motion passed 9 - 0.

E. Consideration of a Petition from Hickory Terrace, L.L.C., Bruce Leonard, Timothy Clark and Laura Clark for Annexation of the Property at the Southeast Corner of Peace Road and Freed Road, a Zoning Classification of "R-1" One Family Residence District and "R-3" Multiple Family Residence District, and a Special Use Permit for a Planned Unit Development.

Manager Nicklas said this petition was continued from the January 12 meeting to permit the petitioners and Born family to negotiate a resolution regarding access to the subdivision. He read a letter from the Born's attorney confirming an executed contract for the sale of the Born home with a closing scheduled for March 16, 2004 and if this is approved the City will not record the agreement and annexation until the closing takes place. Mr. Nicklas said the revised plan eliminates the swimming pool and pool house near the intersection of Freed and Peace Roads.

Jim Stoddard, 122 S. Elm Street, said he represents the petitioners, and explained one revision regarding the agreement. He said the School District contribution would be increased to meet ordinance or what the School District requested whichever is greater.

Commissioner Lorence asked if the acquisition of the Born property would provide a turn lane into the development and Mr. Stoddard said he did not think his clients had made that determination, but he did think the Born property would be annexed upon closing.

Commissioner Steczo asked if the petitioner would consider getting easements along Peace Road in the back of lots 20 & 21 for a future bike path. Mr. Steczo said the goal of the Park District master plan is to eventually link that to the St. Charles bike path. Dave Sanderson, petitioner, said they would agree to that.

Mr. Nicklas said regarding Paragraph 15, Page 13, the City's policy is to pass along current impact fees at the time of permitting. He said they should not delineate amounts, but use "whatever is in affect."

Greg and Stephanie Born, 1510 Freed Road, said they are pleased with the resolution and they now support the project.

Donna Prain, 25179 Shannon Lane, asked to have the flood plain pointed out and Mr. Lorence said it encompassed parts of lots 26, 27, and 28 and some green space. She asked if the Commission would consider a buffer on the flood zone, because she felt the flood zone line was out of date.

Scott Hine, 339 Windfield Drive, said he lives on the SW corner of Windfield Meadows and he is concerned that the large trees on the east remain standing. Mr. Sanderson said they would not take out large trees unless the City requested it.

Julie Evans, 1427 Windfield, asked about the reconstruction of Freed Road and how far it would be to Peace Road. She also asked about the impact of traffic if a stoplight is planned at Peace and Freed because it is very congested. Manager Nicklas asked City Engineer John Brady to address the traffic and the flood plain.

Engineer Brady said the reconstruction would be from Peace Road to the line of the subdivision with utility extension from River Drive to the subdivision. He said that 600 vehicles per day are considered minor and there are certain warrants required before a traffic signal is installed. He said there would need to be a total of 8 hours per day delay. He said that accident experience is another criteria. Mr. Brady said the builders will need to get FEMA approval before building on the lots encompassed in the flood plain and they would need to overcompensate with the retention.

Scott Hine, 1339 Windfield, asked if the bike path would be paved and Mr. Brady said it would be asphalt.

Motion

Commissioner Henderson moved to approve a favorable recommendation with the easement for a bike path and with no recording of the agreement or annexation until the Born closing and Commissioner Lorence seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Chairman Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. George Bridgewater, Pat David, Ken George, Dave Hamilton, Cindy Henderson, Bill Lorence, Chuck Stowe, Larry Steczo and Chairperson John Lewis voted aye. Motion passed 9 - 0.

WORKSHOP ITEMS

A. Consideration of a Conceptual Annexation and P.U.D. Plan from Gracious Living Homes LLC for the Development of an 18.66-Acre Portion of the Strong Farm for a Residential Development to Serve Persons Aged 55 and Older.

Manager Nicklas said Gigi Walker of Gracious Living Homes would present a plan for the residential development for persons 55 and older. He said they have proposed to set aside the Bethany Road frontage for commercial or office/research purposes. Mr. Nicklas said that one issue to keep in mind is that airport flight tracks will be relevant and will be receiving 737's in the future. He said that other topics to be reviewed and discussed are Land use, DeKalb/Taylor Airport use, Bethany Road improvement, and storm water detention.

Jeff Kedaman, Manager of Gracious Living Homes said they are excited about locating a development in the Sycamore area.

Gigi Walker, Director of Development, explained that the subdivision is designed and built for those 55 and over. She said they focus on lifestyle issues. They design small communities with a 2400 square foot clubhouse with a workout room, gathering room, and a library. She said they use a garden theme with individual planting areas if the resident chooses. There is landscaping provided throughout the development. Ms. Walker said the units are all ranches ranging from 1150 to 1500 square feet and are sold as condominiums with association fees. She said they are not an assisted living facility, but do allow for aging in place and are age restricted in that one resident per unit must be 55 or older. She said these residents have high disposable incomes and love to shop. Ms. Walker said that regarding Bethany Road traffic, studies have shown that after the age of 45 the number of vehicles per household drops and many do not leave their house during rush hour. She said this provides safe living for older adults many of whom are single. She said they are proposing 80 units in 4 buildings with garages recessed in the center. The development is pedestrian friendly and professionally landscaped. They have not yet addressed engineering for stormwater. Ms. Walker said Illinois rates 6th in the nation for need of this type of housing and Sycamore is a great place to locate.

Commissioner Steczo asked the price range for the units and Ms. Walker said from \$160,000 to \$200,000.

Commissioner David asked what other organization Ms. Walker is associated with and she said she was previously with Villa America who was looking to build a community on the Monsanto property.

Commissioner Henderson asked if there were Gracious Living Communities in Illinois and Ms. Walker said they completed one in Homewood and in South Holland.

Chairperson Lewis said his major concern is the flight pattern of the airport and Mr. Nicklas said he put that issue on the table as a good neighbor and a beneficiary of the airport. Mr. Nicklas said he did not think the large planes would use it frequently and he did not want to make a large deal out of it, it is just a factor.

Commissioner Lorence said they zoned this area business because of the flight pattern and proximity to the airport and he does not see any reason to change the zoning.

Commissioner David said there is a potential need for this type of development, but the City has limited areas for commercial development.

Ms. Walker said it would be Gracious Living's responsibility to market and make prospective tenants aware of the airport. She said one of their communities is within the blasting zone of a quarry. Ms. Walker said the land is too expensive in other areas of Sycamore.

Commissioner Henderson asked if they had any success in attracting commercial and Ms. Walker said that South Holland and Homewood already had the commercial development. Mr. Kedaman said that rooftops and population attract businesses. He thought the possible uses would be office space or restaurants. He said they would want the street exposure for the residential in the marketing phase, and then develop the commercial.

Commissioner Steczo asked the addresses for the two Illinois communities and Ms. Walker said Homewood is at Lathrop and 185th and S. Holland is south of 159th at State and Prairie.

Mr. Kedaman said the people who buy these homes are an asset to the community because they do not require a lot of services and are volunteers.

Commissioner Stowe asked if the Bethany Road improvements were east of Peace or west of Peace. Mr. Nicklas said he was referring to Peace to Somonauk. He said there could be a number of developers, but they may not develop for a while and if the City steps up to do the improvements, we would do it with recapture rights.

Mr. Nicklas said he purposely remained neutral and agreed there are a limited number of available commercial lots. He said he thought office research would be more consistent for that area. He said the southern boundary of the Strong farm is near the DeKalb boundary line. He said the projections of the Comp Plan determine a need for housing for people of this type and this is one of two places possible for affordable senior housing. He said it is his personal inclination is a favorable recommendation for this project upon seeing some engineering and some frontage.

Commissioner Lorence suggesting the Airport Road corridor east of the park and Mr. Nicklas said that was more commercial retail. Mr. Nicklas said the Bethany Road corridor was becoming health related and would be attractive to a 55 and older community.

Commissioner David said she thinks this is not commercial and is reluctant to change the use.

Ms. Walker said their challenge is economics and they looked at DeKalb, but preferred Sycamore.

Carolyn Watson, 1863 Kerrybrook Court, asked if the distance between the pods was enough for emergency vehicles and Ms. Walker said the work with fire and safety officers and will not build anything they cannot maneuver in. Mr. Nicklas said the City would make sure the building is accessible by ambulance and fire truck.

Chairperson Lewis said it looked like some interest on the part of the Plan Commission, but they were trying to preserve as much of the office and commercial space as possible. He said the impact would be the same to the School District as commercial.

Commissioner Stowe said this is something we need and looks like a decent plan and he was definitely not saying no.

Chairperson Lewis said it sounded like the Commission is interested in talking more. Mr. Nicklas asked if the Plan Commission would consider another workshop with an economic impact analysis and the consensus was positive.

B. Consideration of a Conceptual Annexation and P.U.D. Plan from Neumann Homes for an 118.24-Acre Residential Subdivision North of North Grove Crossing and West of Sycamore Creek Phase Two.

Manager Nicklas said because of the location, this development is dependent on the two adjacent developments for access. He said that Neumann Homes is based in Warrenville and is a production builder that received 1,455 permits in 2003. He said the City's new regulatory framework calls for a delay of three years from the recording of a subdivision of this size to the issuance of the first permits. Mr. Nicklas said the question the Commission needs to wrestle with is timing of permitting in 2007 which is the same timeframe that the bulge of existing and unregulated lots may reach the market.

Andres Mouw, 4355 Weaver Parkway, Warrenville, said the plan consists of 232 homes on lots ranging from 10,000 to 11,300 square feet. He said they were donating a 10-acre school site plus the impact fees which when added to the B & B site will create a middle school site. He said they have met or exceeded contribution level set by B & B to the schools. He said they have 8.1 acres of park space, 6.8 acres of a central community park and 1.3 acres focused toward a neighborhood park. Bike paths follow Springfield with 100-foot right-of-way going to the west and then north in back of the school site. He has a meeting scheduled with Mr. Peek to discuss the parks. He said the price range for the homes will be \$210,000 to \$260,000 in current dollars. Mr. Mouw said they would offer to the City a \$1,000 per lot voluntary contribution.

Manager Nicklas asked if they were dedicating or donating the school site and Mr. Mouw said it would be a donation to the school and the park.

Commissioner David asked if they would agree to delay until 2012 and Mr. Mouw said that was farther out than they are prepared to, but he would discuss options.

Chairperson Lewis asked Mr. Nicklas if he saw this fitting in 2012 and Mr. Nicklas said yes, with the regulation ordinance this could begin in 2007, but with an annexation they have the ability to ask for more time.

Commissioner Lorence said the infrastructure needed for this development will not start until 2010 and Mr. Mouw said Mr. Fagenal of North Grove Crossing will begin the south access this year.

Commissioner George said they are limited to 46 permits per year and if started in 2010 would see reduction total in number of units and then it does increase again in 2011.

Commissioner Stowe said he thought the timing of this needed to be revised otherwise he does not think this will fly. Mr. Mouw said other than the 4.5 municipal site they have met or exceeded the standards B & B has set and if that is not true he would like to know.

Manager Nicklas said they have met the standards, but it is the pace that is the real problem.

Chairperson Lewis said it would be difficult for this body to consider anything less than a 2012 start date. Mr. Muow said that other than timing, could he get direction on the site plan.

Mr. Nicklas said from the standpoint of street maintenance, they need to eliminate the island at the cul-de-sac and they would rather see a through street.

Mr. Nicklas said that boulevards are not practical in this area, because of salt in the winter.

Commissioner Steczo said the Park District would prefer dedication of baseball and soccer fields rather than picnic areas.

REPORTS

Manager Nicklas said at the next meeting they would begin a series of workshops on the Unified Development Ordinance. He said they would review the format, readability, and organization.

PERSONS TO BE HEARD FROM THE FLOOR ON OTHER THAN AGENDA ITEMS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Commissioner George moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m. and Commissioner Steczo seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairman Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 9 – 0.

Approve:

Chairman – John Lewis

Attest:

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Candy Smith, City Clerk