
SYCAMORE PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES OF APRIL 11, 2005

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 14, 2005.

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to approve the Minutes of March 14, 2005 and Commissioner David seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 10-0.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Lewis added Audience to Visitors to the agenda.

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to approve the agenda with the addition and Commissioner Bridgewater seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 10-0.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

Mayor Swedberg thanked the Commissioners for the job they have done the past four years and some for years before that. He said they are the offensive line for the City since they are the first to look at development proposals and make sure they are in line with the City Ordinances. He said it is a difficult and voluntary job and as the outgoing Mayor he wanted to thank them for their service.

CONSIDERATIONS

A. Consideration of the Final Plat for Grandview Townhouse Unit Three.

Manager Nicklas said this is the final phase for this Townhouse P.U.D. He said since the townhouses will be sold in fee simple, he has left the final delineation to the Plat Officer. The final plat depicts 74 townhouses and the private streets that will serve them.

Commissioner McBride said he received a call from Commissioner Brotcke to relay the concern that he thought a second egress was needed. Mr. McBride said they had addressed this and the Commission had gotten Mr. Krpan to reduce the density.

Mr. Nicklas said the options of a second egress were investigated, but access could not be gained off Peace Road or out of Sycamore Prairie Business Park.

Commissioner Davey said the traffic study concluded that traffic would not be a problem.

Milan Krpan, 640 Krpan Court, DeKalb, IL, said he was available for comment.

Motion

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

Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Commissioners Bill Davey, Pat David, Ken George, Dave Hamilton, Bill Lorence, John McBride, Larry Steczo, Chuck Stowe, George Bridgewater, and Chairperson John Lewis voted aye. Motion passed 10-0.

B. Consideration of the Final Plat for Phase 3 of the Townhomes of Townsend Woods Planned Unit Development.

Manager Nicklas said AMP Builders has submitted this final plat depicting a third and final phase of the townhome development which will include about 39 units.

Nick Panzica, AMP Builders, 1066 Rose Drive, said this plat completes the subdivision and finishes the entrance to Maplewood Drive.

Motion

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

Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Commissioners Bill Davey, Pat David, Ken George, Dave Hamilton, Bill Lorence, John McBride, Larry Steczo, Chuck Stowe, George Bridgewater, and Chairperson John Lewis voted aye. Motion passed 10-0.

C. Consideration of the Final Plat for Unit One of the Sycamore Creek Planned Unit Development.

Manager Nicklas said this is the first final plat for this development which was approved August 5, 2002. He said it comprises about one-third of the overall development site and depicts 101 of the planned 352 single family house lots, a large central public park and a considerable share of the overall detention

facilities. Mr. Nicklas said B & B Development is presently negotiating with the Herst family concerning the right-of-way for the Lindgren Road realignment with the extension of North Grove Road to the west. He said it is important to proceed with the understanding that the City, according to the annexation agreement, has the ability to assert its imminent domain powers. He said they hope to have that completed this year.

Commissioner Lorence said he wanted to be assured this will happen.

Commissioner McBride said the voluntary contribution of \$1500/lot to offset the credit that would be due to the developer because of the acreage needs to be formalized. He said he has contacted the City and the School District and he is hearing that the preference that B & B's legal counsel would draft a document. His question is whether the \$1500/lot would be put into escrow or would there be a letter of agreement.

Mr. Nicklas said there were details that needed to be worked out.

Charles Blood, B & B Development, 40W320 Fox Road, St. Charles, IL, said although they were not required to, they would like to get Lindgren Road done this year.

Commissioner Lorence said it would be a plus if they could at least get a sub grade this year.

Chairperson Lewis asked Mr. Blood if he had any issue with the concept Commissioner McBride brought up.

Mr. Blood said that now that the land is the donation, his legal counsel will set that up.

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to approve a favorable recommendation to Council with the assurances and Commissioner Hamilton seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Commissioners Bill Davey, Pat David, Ken George, Dave Hamilton, Bill Lorence, John McBride, Larry Steczo, Chuck Stowe, George Bridgewater, and Chairperson John Lewis voted aye. Motion passed 10-0.

D. Consideration of the Unified Development Ordinance.

Manager said this is a revised draft and there may be another quick staff review before the UDO is approved by Council. He listed general changes to the UDO from the Zoning Ordinance as follows:

- A compilation of the City's zoning, development, and subdivision regulations in one text;
- A new format for the identification of allowable uses in the various zoning districts (Chapter 5). Presently, the pyramiding of allowable uses from zoning district to zoning district requires the user to leaf through dozens of pages to find the first reference to a use, and whether or not it is a permitted or special use. In the UDO, all allowable uses are identified in Table 5.3.1 (pages 118-128).
- A new format for the identification of required parking per use group. The UDO provides a table of parking requirements (pages 193-198).

- New formats for the identification of allowable signs. New tables (pages 211 and 220) indicate more clearly where certain types of signs are legal, and the allowable sign areas in each zoning district.
- New landscaping regulations. Presently, the Zoning Code's landscape requirements (Article 12.07) primarily lay out screening requirements around commercial parking areas. The new landscape requirements (Article 6.6, pages 168-182) presume much more "green" in the interior of large parking lots, and more detail about buffer areas between dissimilar use groups. They also define higher expectations for visibility around plantings near intersections (see page 172).
- A concise presentation of the School, Park District, and Library impact fees in one place (Article 6.11; pages 244-252).
- A distillation and more concise presentation of the storm water (Section 6.12.1), sanitary sewer (Section 6.12.2), and water distribution system (Section 6.12.3) design and construction standards (see pages 253-262).
- A more economical presentation of the design and construction standards for streets and sidewalks than the multiple locations for such standards presently in the City Code (see Section 6.12.4; pages 262-269).

Mr. Nicklas said that sometime in this calendar year a county-wide "Model Stormwater Management Ordinance" will be adopted by the City of Sycamore, the City of DeKalb, the County of DeKalb, and the Town of Cortland to meet the state's NPDES Phase II requirements for detention, erosion control, floodway management and other considerations. He said this will be an addendum to the UDO.

Commissioner McBride asked if subdivisions being developed would be grandfathered or as soon as this is accepted would they have to comply.

Mr. Nicklas said that once something has been submitted and the engineering is done to the current standard that is what they are held to until that particular development is completed. He said that our stormwater regulations are as vigorous as any out there.

Commissioner McBride said regarding the erosion issue there are some developments that are washing over the roads and Mr. Nicklas said that is an enforcement issue.

Commissioner Lorence said some issues are governed by federal law. He said 7 days after a lot is graded it must be seeded.

Mr. Nicklas said there have been 6 in depth discussions and 2 overview discussions and the Plan Commission and Zoning Board have done a lot of work reviewing this document.

Commissioner George asked if contributions and impact fees mirror ordinances. He said the ordinances call for annual audits of funds and that needs to be done and the City should enforce that it is done.

Commissioner McBride said the School District complies with the ordinance and publishes those audits in the newspaper.

Mr. Nicklas asked if he could get a full text of that report he would get it to Council and he would do the same with the Park District and the Library.

Motion

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

Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Commissioners Bill Davey, Pat David, Ken George, Dave Hamilton, Bill Lorence, John McBride, Larry Steczo, Chuck Stowe, George Bridgewater, and Chairperson John Lewis voted aye. Motion passed 10-0.

Chairperson Lewis commended Mr. Nicklas and the City staff for their work on this document.

WORKSHOP ITEMS

A. Consideration of a Concept Plan for the Development of the Carls Farm Property on Airport Road.

Manager Nicklas said this plan came before the Commission as a concept back in January. He said the Comprehensive Plan has this land designated as green space and the Commission had asked Commissioner Steczo to get the Park District's consensus.

Commissioner Steczo said the consensus of the Park District was that the City should adhere to the Comprehensive Plan to keep this as green space. He said they felt the Park District may have an interest in this land in the future and there was concern about traffic on Airport Road.

Commissioner David said this concept plan interrupts what could be a larger more pleasant green space in the future.

Brett Brown, 1958 Aberdeen, attorney for the developer Steve Woodrick, said he was joined by Dr. Woodrick and Realtor Rick Hoffman and they felt this was a good time to present the concept plan since the City has completed the fiscal impact study. He said this type of project is a net benefit to all taxing bodies by adding real estate tax revenue without adding children to schools. He said since there is not a park proposed on the property and because of its proximity, the impact fees could be used to make improvements to the main Park. He said this would serve as a buffer between the Park and the new Airport Road.

Rick Hoffman, 535 Bapson Road, Monroe Center, said there is a need for this type of housing in Sycamore. He said it is not age restricted, but typical buyers are without children. He said this development will fill a need for the community by a local developer.

Steve Woodrick, 1513 Sunflower Drive, said he does not want to do anything that brings people dragging and kicking to the table. He said when he was practicing dentistry his patients said there is nothing for seniors in Sycamore. He said he spoke with Luke Glowiak of the School District and he was all for it. Dr. Woodrick said his plan includes 184 units with a buildout of 7 years and will enhance the east entrance to town.

Commissioner McBride said his concern with the Comprehensive Plan was that creating so much residential use has increased the price of land so that this type of development is priced out of the market.

He said the School District would like to see the City stick to the Comprehensive Plan and wait to vary from it until it is time to revise.

Commissioner David said there are 810 multi-family units on the books for the next 3 years. She said that since we are growing, it seems premature to take adjacent land to the Park District.

Commissioner Steczo said if this was already zoned residential he would vote for it. He said he does not see this as a benefit to the Park District at the expense of green space.

Commissioner Davey asked what the School District's position was for Gracious Living and Commissioner McBride said they were opposed to changing the zoning from commercial and industrial.

Commissioner Davey said this request is not without precedence since the Plan Commission agreed to vary from the Comp Plan for Gracious Living Homes.

Commissioner Lorence said this portion of Airport Road may be interrupted or removed when the extension is completed.

Commissioner Bridgewater said he was hesitant to make exceptions to the Comp Plan, but they should investigate requests with care and concern.

Commissioner Stowe said they should stay with the Comp Plan and not give up the green space.

Mr. Nicklas said that the Gracious Living Homes project wanted to be along Bethany Road because of the nearness to health facilities. He said the proper buffer between park space and commercial is multi-family.

Brett Brown asked if it would make a difference if the School District favored this project. He said the plan is flexible and this project has more affordable housing units. He said that Comprehensive Plans are meant to be amended and he would like a consensus to know whether to go further with the plans. He said Sycamore has a lot of green space and should be located throughout the community.

Commissioner McBride said since the election there will be new members on the boards, they should wait to see how the new members feel.

Commissioner Steczo said there are more people per acre in Sycamore every year and this development will not only take away green space but add people per acre.

Commissioner David said she did not think rooftops were desirable at the entrance to town.

Brett Brown said he would like a brain storming session with Council and will wait for the new officials to take office in May.

B. Consideration of the Community Fiscal Impact Study Prepared by the Center for Governmental Studies.

Manager Nicklas said Council commissioned this study August 2004 and was completed in March. He said the methodology is a land-use base approach. He said the plan assumes the Comp Plan remains

substantially the same over the next 10 years. Mr. Nicklas said the study shows the City, Park District, and Library ending up with a net positive fiscal position in 2015, but shows the School District would be in a negative position at minus \$8 million dollars. He said some of the questions or issues to consider are what are we doing right or wrong right now, what have we learned about recent growth that can be of use when the Plan Commission next considers a residential annexation, what policy changes should be considered on the basis of the findings of this study, and how much would it cost to resolve the imbalance and who should write that check. Mr. Nicklas said new development is contributing now more than existing housing to the funding of public services. He said that the absolute fiscal impact is only one measure of the desirability of development and an economic impact study would be the next step.

Chairperson Lewis said they should follow through with an economic impact study. He said that study would have little impact on the School District because it would affect sales tax and not property taxes. He also suggested keeping in mind that the basic assumption of the fiscal impact study was the evaluation of growth based on new growth paying for itself. He said philosophically they need to analyze the question of the community subsidizing children moving into existing homes.

Commissioner Lorence said the people moving into existing homes cannot afford the new housing so maybe we need to subsidize them.

Commissioner George said the Building Department's surveys reflect 64.5% of the new homes don't have children and asked if the School District tracks that.

Commissioner McBride said they track that through transportation software. He said they should be careful with the message that all newcomers have to pay 100%. He said the study seems to reveal that the overall revenue stream coming in is neutral and the taxing bodies would need to respond by cutting taxes or using the surplus as an opportunity to address community needs. He said the School Board is going to review the study at their next meeting. Mr. McBride questioned the 5% discount rate and the 1.5% on risk.

Mr. Nicklas said Mr. Dahlquist said he used an average discount rate.

Chairperson Lewis said the time value of money is 3% – 4% and does not know why 5% was used.

Commissioner Davey said he agreed an economic study would be helpful. He said new homes are driving up existing home prices which would increase property tax.

Commissioner Stowe said he thought it was interesting that the School District lost \$8 million over ten years, but they lose \$11 to \$12 million the first two years. He said it looks like the steps the City has taken to slow growth like: limiting of permits, staggering development starts, and raising fees have been a positive impact as time goes on.

Commissioner Lorence said the percentage of children in existing and new housing is the same. He said a transfer fee for existing house sales might be in order.

Mr. Nicklas said they needed to decide what to ask from the next developer to cover the imbalance, but questioned what could be done for the existing homes. He said they could look into transition fees, transfer fees, or go to voters.

REPORTS

None

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

None

Chairperson Lewis thanked the members of the Commission for their dedication over the past years and said it was a pleasure to be chair of a group of people who have taken their work seriously and done a good job for the people of Sycamore.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. and Commissioner Steczo seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 10-0.

Approve:

Chairperson – John Lewis

Attest:

Candy Smith, City Clerk