

TO: The Sycamore Plan Commission

FROM: Bill Nicklas
City Administrator

DATE: June 5, 2002

RE: June 10, 2002 Plan Commission Meeting

The Plan Commission agenda includes one action item and three workshop items. The public hearing on the proposed Sycamore Creek planned development has been continued from the regular Plan Commission meeting of May 13.

I Action Items

A. Consideration of a Petition from B&B Enterprises for an Annexation Agreement, Annexation and Rezoning, and Preliminary Plat and Plan Approval for a Planned Unit Development Known as Sycamore Creek.

At the regular Plan Commission meeting of November 12, 2001, the Commission reviewed a concept plan for the Sycamore Creek planned unit development. At that time, the Commission made several suggestions for revision as the developer, B&B Development, LP, proceeded to work out the rather complicated engineering issues associated with the Heron Creek watershed and the future configuration of the Airport Road extension. The Commission's suggestions included the linking of public park space with bike paths to future developments to the south and east, and the consideration of a residential land use rather than a more intensive commercial land use along the future Airport Road extension. The City's Land Use Plan depicts a commercial use on the east side of the extension. However, several commissioners were concerned that the bend in the Airport Road extension south of Plank Road would not afford easy access to a neighborhood commercial strip, and would possibly create traffic conflicts with residential traffic entering and leaving the proposed subdivision.

Since November, the developer's stormwater engineer (John Wills of Christopher Burke Engineering) and planner (Chuck Hanlon of Land Vision, formerly Land Planning Services) have met numerous times with the City Engineer and City Administrator and have also collaborated with the County Engineer to address a number of challenging traffic, storm water, and land conservation issues. The result is the attached development

plan that comprises a 220.21-acre farm parcel to the east of the Heron Creek planned unit development. The parcel is presently within DeKalb County, is bounded on the north by Lindgren Road, and aligns on the west with the future extension of Airport Road. The developer is of course known for the Heron Creek development that was annexed in February, 1999 and has since been under development in several phases of single-family homes. B&B Development intends to create a planned unit development that is compatible with the housing development it has had under development to the west.

The Sycamore Creek P.U.D. primarily features “R-1” One Family Residence zoning with detached single-family homes, with the exception of a 4.09-acre area to be zoned “R-3,” Multiple Family Residence District—an area that would be reserved for townhouses to provide a compatible transition to the townhouse development that Mr. John Castle recently brought before the Plan Commission. The Commission will quickly note a number of “signature” B&B features, including abundant open space, neighborhood parks, the careful treatment of the Heron Creek watershed, and custom-built homes. A more detailed analysis of the annexation agreement and preliminary plan follows:

1. The Plan.

- a) Overall Area. The plan depicts a development of 220.21 acres.
- b) Land Uses. The table below displays the land uses in the proposed plan:

Single-Family Homes	102.54 Acres
Private Park, Detention & Conservation Areas	55.75 Acres
Public Park Area	7.12 Acres
Bike Pathways	2.88 Acres
Townhouse Area	4.09 Acres
Public Road Right of Way	47.83 Acres
Total	220.21 Acres

- c) Density. The density of the single-family zoning is 1.76 units per acre (381 single-family units divided by 216.12 acres). The allowable density of the area is three (3) units per acre.
- d) Open Space. The Comp Plan requires low-density, single family planned developments to provide a minimum open space of ten percent of the gross land area. The proposed development provides open space equivalent to 52.5 percent of the gross land area of the single family zoning (which includes rights-of-way).
- e) Single-Family Homes. A total of 381 single family detached homes are planned. The average lot size is 11,724 square feet. By way of comparison, the average lot size in the recently-approved Wiseman-Hughes project was 10,800 square feet. The first phase of home building is not expected until 2005. It is estimated that an average of 45 house lots will be sold each year.
- f) Townhouse Area. The 4.09-acre townhouse site backs up to the 7.6-acre townhouse development approved by the City Council on April 15, 2002. As the Plan Commission will recall, the developer of the adjacent townhouse

area—John Castle Builders—has provided access easements to the proposed “R-3” zoning on the B&B plan.

- g) Commercial Uses. None.
- h) Public Park Space. One large publicly-dedicated park area is shown roughly in the center of the development plan, with street access around most of its perimeter as well as a bike path connection to the natural or conservation area featuring the Heron Creek watershed. A smaller public park with access around its entire perimeter is shown in the northeast quadrant. The developer has proposed their dedication to the Park District, which will take up the plan at its regular meeting of June 18.
- i) Private Park Space. In addition to the public park area, B&B Development proposes 4 neighborhood parks comprising about 4 acres, plus a large conservation area that surrounds Heron Creek to the south.
- j) Bike Paths. One bike path runs along the south side of Lindgren Road and along Plank Road. It would be ten feet in width and would serve both bicyclists and pedestrians. Another bike path connects the public parks with Presidential Parkway and the trails in the large conservation area to the south. The internal bikeway and trail system will also serve a regional purpose. It will eventually be linked with the bikeway that the Land Use Plan dedicates on the east side of the future Airport Road extension, which will ultimately connect the development with the Great Western Trail.
- k) Detention basins. The plan includes a system of drainage basins that would provide regional storm water storage that includes the runoff from the development area and the storm release from the Heron Creek basin.
- l) Lindgren Road Widening and Reconstruction. Rather than have the developer improve only one-half the width of Lindgren Road—i.e. that half adjoining the subject property—the City staff and the developer have agreed that the developer will complete the entire width of Lindgren Road from Plank Road eastward to the east side of Presidential Parkway, which is the main entrance to the subdivision. The eventual developer(s) of property east of this point and on the north side of Lindgren Road will be asked to approach their public responsibility in the same fashion in order to provide a more finished roadway.
- m) Water Mains. The proposed plan would loop the northeastern reaches of the existing system serving the Heron Creek subdivision.
- n) Maintenance of common areas. A homeowners association will be responsible for the maintenance of the plan’s large open spaces and common areas not otherwise dedicated to the Park District.

2. The Annexation Agreement.

The key points in the agreement are as follows:

- a) The term is 20 years.
- b) The City agrees to hold a public hearing for the “R-3” zoned property at such time as a mini-development plan is proposed for this area.
- c) The developer will provide an irrevocable letter of credit for the public improvements on the site.

- d) The developer is responsible for additional widening and reconstruction of Lindgren Road, and its re-configuration to better align with Plank Road and the future North Grove Road in accordance with the direction of the County Engineer.
- e) The developer is responsible for phased payments to DeKalb County for the construction of their portion of Airport Road abutting the property.
- f) The developer is responsible for a proportional share of the cost of traffic signals at Airport Road and Plank Road when they are warranted.
- g) The developer will be responsible for a proportional share of the cost of installing signals at the intersection of Plank Road and Lindgren Road when the traffic warrants are established.

3. The Traffic Study.

The developer has provided a traffic study performed by Kenig, Lindgren, O'Hara and Aboona of Rosemont, Illinois. A summary is attached as well as a review by City Engineer John Brady. The firm projects 3,535 vehicles per day from the single-family area (3700 were projected from the Wiseman-Hughes project). The City Engineer believes the traffic engineers underestimated the traffic that would head west on Peace Road, lessening the impact on southbound movements on Il Rt. 23.

4. The Fiscal Impact Study.

The City Administrator completed a fiscal impact study using the new impact fees and updated assumptions based on recent City and School budgets. The development is projected to have a positive fiscal impact on School District finances because of the relatively high equalized assessed value for each home. In terms of operations, the fiscal impact on the City is positive on an annual and on a cumulative basis. However, as the attached spreadsheet shows, if the heavy cost of the City's largest relevant capital expense--full street replacement--is included, based on a twenty-year amortization, the revenues generated from the development cannot offset the capital cost. This calculation probably skews the City's fiscal impact model and is not generally included in fiscal impact studies. However, it is instructive in indicating the need for recurring capital dollars based on revenue from residential as well as commercial and industrial property. So long as the City must reduce its property tax rate to keep the composite property tax rate down or stable, it must look to substantial annual increases in sales tax revenues, grants, and other funding sources to help offset the cost of street maintenance over time.

A copy of the Wiseman-Hughes fiscal impact analysis is attached for contrast. The Wiseman-Hughes spreadsheet has been modified to spread the impact of the development over the same number of years as the Sycamore Creek development for a more fair comparison. Clearly, the higher EAV of the Sycamore Creek development makes a major positive difference in terms of fiscal impact.

5. The Park District Review and Annexation.

The developer's plan for annexation will be considered by the Park Board on June 18.

6. Proposed Variations From Policy or Past Practice. None.

Recommendation

The proposed plan conforms with the land use vision of the Comp Plan of May 2000 and the annexation agreement exceeds the expectations of the Land Use Plan in terms of the re-configuration of Lindgren Road, improvements to the Heron Creek basin, and open space. The developer has proposed a land use and a development plan that is very compatible with the nearest contiguous development to the west, and for all intents and purposes is an extension of the Heron Creek plan. The development plan affords amenities (neighborhood parks; a large conservation area; an integrated bike path and trail system) and infrastructure improvements (e.g. the looping of the present dead-end water mains serving Heron Creek; road realignments; the extension of Airport Road) that will enhance public services for residents of adjacent developments. Finally, the likely deferral of development of the Sycamore Creek project until late 2005 and the projected pace of annual building permits (about 45) will be in line with the manageable pace established in the Heron Creek development phases.

A favorable Plan Commission recommendation is requested.

II Workshop Items

A. Consideration of a Petition from Lance Klinger to Revise Section 9.03.1 of the Sycamore Zoning Code to Permit the Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages in an Outdoors Area Associated with a Restaurant.

Mr. Klinger is the owner of Ski's Pub at 1001 West State Street in Sycamore. He is interested in constructing a patio on the west side of his building to provide outdoor dining that includes the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Such outdoor liquor sales and consumption are presently prohibited in Sycamore, according to the commercial zoning provisions of the Sycamore Zoning Code (Section 9.03.1). The only exception to this rule is the special one-day permits that can be issued no more than three times a year to licensed liquor establishments. The detailed rules concerning such special events are found in the City Code (Title 3, Chapter 2, Section 3-2-6, D).

Mr. Klinger approached the City Council on May 20 and the City Council referred further consideration to the Plan Commission. Because the public notice requirement could not be met for the June Plan Commission meeting, a formal hearing will be held at the July Plan Commission meeting. The purpose of this agenda item is to give the Commission and Mr. Klinger an informal opportunity to go over the details of his plan, and to consider the wider implications of permitting outdoor liquor consumption within the City limits outside the parameters of one-day special events.

Aside from practical considerations concerning the public safety that are typically laid out in any local regulations concerning outdoor liquor consumption, the Commission and the Council will also need to consider this policy question in the light of past practice and community sentiment. Commissioners can probably list any number of communities, large and small, that permit the serving of alcoholic beverages in discreetly separated sidewalk cafes and other controlled circumstances. There is no universal test of the value

of such recreational opportunities for the community. It is ultimately a lifestyle choice—a “community lifestyle” choice.

B. Consideration of a Proposal from Burnside Homes to Develop Approximately 155 Acres at the Southwest Corner of Bethany Road and Somonauk Street, Adjacent to the City’s Regional Retention Pond.

Burnside Homes of Downers Grove, Illinois has requested a workshop to review their concept plan for a planned residential development at the southwest corner of Bethany Road and Somonauk Street, adjacent to the City’s regional retention pond. The developer has prepared the attached packet with the assistance of the Lannert Group of Geneva to thoughtfully illustrate their intentions. The packet provides some analysis of the drainage patterns, a suggested traffic flow pattern, and architectural views of a variety of single family homes primarily priced and designed for a targeted market of “active adults.”

In preliminary discussions with the City staff, the developer was made aware that the proposed land use conflicts with the current City Land Use Plan, which suggests “office research” uses for the area. The selection of office and research land uses in the Comprehensive Plan that was adopted on May 15, 2000 followed a series of community discussions and hearings. Among the themes repeated by participants in these hearings was an interest in preserving opportunities for light industrial and commercial land uses, that would in turn provide career paths for local residents and their families. The Bethany Road corridor from IL Rt. 23 to Somonauk Road was considered a viable location for such uses, partly because of existing uses and the promise of the nearby Sycamore Prairie Business Park. It was also reasoned that the further extension of the northeast/southwest runway of the DeKalb Taylor Airport (Runway 2-20) in the direction of the Strong Farm would create economic and political disincentives to the construction of quality homes.

Since the Comp Plan was approved in the spring of 2000, the interest in residential development at the edges of the Sycamore community has grown steadily, and the market for light industrial and research-oriented businesses has remained soft. The proposition brought by Burnside Homes raises some challenging planning issues:

- a) what is a realistic time frame for determining the ultimate best use of an undeveloped area? Should our planning horizon be two years? five years? or twenty years?
- b) as one studies the mix of uses envisioned in the Comp Plan of 2000 (see the attached table), would the conversion of 160 acres intended for office/research development to residential development adversely tip the desired balance of land uses? Given the available road network, patterns of commercial growth, and utilities, the City’s planning area contains substantially fewer land parcels that will be suitable for commercial and light industrial/office-research development, as opposed to residential development. Once these limited areas are developed, the potential for continuing nonresidential growth is further limited.

The focus of this workshop will be the proposed land use. Once some direction is given concerning the land use question, other related questions such as access and traffic flows,

storm water retention, fiscal impact, development density, capacity of the sanitary system, etc. may be addressed. If the Commission is strongly inclined to stand by the Comp Plan vision of May 2000, then further effort to plan a residential development in this area would be ill advised.

C. Consideration of an Administration Recommendation to Create an Administrative Hearing Officer.

A public hearing is also necessary for any change to the City Code that would accommodate minor plat amendments under the authority of an administrative hearing officer. The hearing will occur on July 8, when proper notice can be given. In the interim, the Commission is invited to comment informally on the position of plat officer. The City Attorney has reviewed the experience of other northern Illinois communities and the applicable state statutes, and has provided the attached draft for review.

Plan Commission direction is recommended.