

TO: The Sycamore Plan Commission

FROM: Bill Nicklas  
City Administrator

DATE: October 9, 2002

RE: October 14, 2002 Plan Commission Meeting

The Plan Commission agenda has four action items and two workshop items. One item—the vacation of the alley south of Turner Place—has been dropped from the agenda. The petitioner, Steve Hiatt, has withdrawn his request.

## **I Action Items**

### **A. Consideration of a Petition from Ideal Industries for the Annexation of Property Located at 1020 West Prairie Drive.**

On February 11, 1991 (Ordinance 90.41), the City of Sycamore and Ideal Industries, Inc. agreed that at any time within twenty years Ideal Industries could petition for the annexation of all or a portion of Tract 4 as depicted on the attached map. This 7.58 acre tract has frontage on Prairie Drive and according to the terms of the agreement of 1991 the area is to be zoned “M-2” Heavy Manufacturing.

The petitioner is interested in annexing about 6.484 acres of this area and intends to transfer ownership of the annexed parcel to an industrial building developer named Robert Loos. Mr. Loos in turn hopes to construct one or more buildings for sale or lease to small firms looking for an “incubator” for their expanding businesses. The attached annexation plat and legal description denote the 6.484-acre parcel.

A favorable recommendation is requested.

### **B. Consideration of a Petition from Ideal Industries to Consider Certain Amendments to an Annexation Agreement Dated March 7, 1991 Relating to the Dedication of Borden Avenue and Permitted Encroachments Along the Street’s Right-of-Way.**

Once again, the “pre-annexation” agreement (attached) that was approved in 1991 has a claim on the Commission’s attention. Paragraph 4 a, 6 of that agreement references the

need to relocate certain above ground appurtenances next to the Ideal facility at the southwest corner of Park Avenue and Borden Avenue. These appurtenances include a hydrant, post indicator valves for the adjacent building's sprinkler system, an air-handling unit attached to the building, and several steps leading into a side door. All of these appurtenances were later shielded by a steel guardrail which is evident today. The staff is satisfied with the remedy provided by the guardrail and recommend an amendment to the annexation agreement which removes the necessity of eliminating the appurtenances, which would require a substantial expenditure with no obvious public benefit.

At the Plan Commission meeting of September 9, a recommendation concerning this matter was deferred so the City staff might clarify whether there would be any legal liability in allowing the aforesaid encroachments to remain. The City has adopted, by reference, the Illinois Department of Transportation's standards for the separation of guardrails from the nearest curb. As the attached graphic depicts, guardrails adjacent to mountable curbs may be as close as 10 feet from the face of the curb. The guardrail along Ideal's manufacturing facility is more than ten feet away. In addition, the curbing on Borden Avenue is of the barrier-type, which allows a further margin of protection.

We know that the encroachments pose no threat to public safety, that the guardrail in place complies with locally-accepted engineering standards, and that any encroachment in the public way resulted from a City request years ago to run a street through the Ideal property. Ideal's agreement to remove the encroachments back in 1991 was based on their assumption that the manufacturing facility would be razed at some future point. The razing of the building is no longer a serious option, with the decision to attach and integrate the new warehouse facility. In view of these facts, the staff request a favorable Plan Commission recommendation.

### **C. Consideration of an Amendment to the Heron Creek Annexation Agreement Relating to a Preliminary Plat Proposed by Stonebreaker Builders, L.L.C.**

At its regular July meeting, the Plan Commission considered a concept plan presented by Ron Stonebreaker of Stonebreaker Builders for a townhome development for the "R-3" Multiple Family zoning in the Heron Creek planned development, north of Peace Road. This area was annexed and zoned in March of 1999 with a special use permit for attached townhomes. Mr. Stonebreaker's plan for "Stonegate" was formulated with the assistance of Land Vision's Dave Waden. At the July meeting, the Commission made suggestions regarding access, open space, parking, bikepaths, the view of the development from Peace Road, etc. Mr. Stonebreaker has revised his plan accordingly and returns with a preliminary plan that features the following:

- a) A 14.83 acre site, as in the concept plan;
- b) 130 units for a density of 8.76 dwelling units per gross acre, as in the concept plan;
- c) two private parks totaling .97 acres—a slightly higher total than in the concept plan;
- d) a publicly-dedicated east/west roadway of standard City design (66 foot right-of-way, 35 feet from back to back of curb) as in the concept plan;

- e) a reorientation of the buildings so the garages do not face Peace Road;
- f) additional guest parking of 113 spaces (versus 109 in the concept plan);
- g) a landscaped berm parallel with Peace Road. The petitioner has not specified the height of the berm. The staff recommend an average height of three feet (3') with deciduous and coniferous trees spaced at a maximum of twelve feet (12') on center.
- h) A widened (10-foot) sidewalk/bikepath on the south side of the public street.

Mr. Stonebreaker has also provided elevation views of the townhouse buildings.

The staff request a favorable Plan Commission recommendation with the following changes:

- ◆ the continuation of the 10-foot wide bikepath along the west side of Frantum Road to connect bicyclists moving along Stonegate Drive with the intersection at Peace Road. From there, the bicyclist will be able to pick up the bikepath on the south side of Peace Road that B&B Development will be installing.
- ◆ a variation in the configuration of guest parking for the visitor's convenience. In the proposed plan, no parking is allowed behind garages. The alternative for visitors is to park at limited remote spots. If perpendicular parking was introduced behind the sidewalks on the southern edge of the two park spaces in place of the parallel spaces shown on the private drive, this would result in the net gain of about 17 off-street parking spaces. In addition, another six perpendicular spaces could be added along the Com Ed easement south of Stonegate Drive, and about six spaces could be added along the easement north of Stonegate Drive if the parallel spaces were changed to perpendicular spaces.
- ◆ the continuation of Stonegate Drive and the adjacent sidewalks to the west property line to avoid a "spite strip."
- ◆ a reference on the plat that there will be a 3-foot landscaped berm established on the south property line of the development according to specifications approved by the City Engineer.

#### **D. Consideration of a Final Plat for the Townhomes of Townsend Woods.**

On August 21, 2000 the City Council approved an amendment to the Townsend Woods annexation agreement to permit the development of 101 attached single-family townhouses on an 11.6-acre site that is parallel with, and immediately east of, the commercially-zoned frontage that extends from Maplewood Drive south to Mt. Hunger Road. The Council action also approved a special use permit for the attached townhomes and a preliminary plan. A copy of the approved preliminary plan is attached.

In the interim since the August 2000 Council action, the principals involved in the development firm have changed somewhat and their business has been focused elsewhere. Their business name has also changed to AMP Builders, Inc. The petitioner has presented a final plat that conforms with the conditions established by the preliminary plat for access, open space, right-of-way configuration, retention, utility easements, etc. The final plat does not depict actual units, and is not obligated to do so. The plat does

establish the lot footprints which are consistent with the preliminary plat. When the townhouses are presented for building review, the plat officer can review and approve the common lot lines for such dwellings. For reference, the area of the plat will contain about 17 units.

A favorable Plan Commission recommendation is requested.

## **II Workshop Items**

### **A. Consideration of a Concept Plan for a Residential Subdivision on the Kocher Farm, East of Illinois Rt. 23 and North of Plank Road.**

Dave Johnson of the development firm John Clare LTD has requested a workshop session on his concept for a mixed residential development on the 95.5-acre Kocher farm that is located east of the DeKalb Clinic site on Plank Road, and immediately north and east of the B&B developments. The attached brochure prepared by Mr. Johnson briefly describes his firm's history and his intentions for the site. Mr. Johnson and his partner, Shari Neeley, operate a small development firm that specializes in creating unique layouts for unusual sites. One of their most recent initiatives is the development of the Hoger Farm that lays south of Lowe's and behind the commercial property along Sycamore Road in DeKalb. The staff's first face-to-face meeting with Mr. Johnson was in early April of this year.

Mr. Johnson is well aware that the City is beginning a planning process that will result in both a Comprehensive Plan update and a sub-area plan for the area in which he hopes to develop homes. He is also aware that in this context the Commission may be reluctant to make any binding comments concerning land use, access, open space and other concerns affecting the development of the Kocher farm. However, the area his firm wishes to develop is contiguous to, or adjacent to, developed areas that have given some definition to the planning options in terms of land use and access, in particular. While he awaits the results of the planning process that will involve the Commission, the Council, our staff, our planning consultant, and any interested citizens, Mr. Johnson would like to constructively work on details that will arise from any planning preferences that the Commission may wish to suggest.

### **B. Consideration of a Joint Meeting of the Plan Commission and City Council on November 11 to Participate in the Construction of an Image Preference Survey for Public Presentation.**

On September 16 the City Council approved a contract with Land Vision of St. Charles to perform mapping services associated with our comprehensive planning process and to lead the City through a "visioning" process that focuses us on certain planning objectives. The tool the consultants will use is called an "image preference survey." This survey is a consensus-building technique that helps a community articulate its core values and acceptable images it wants to project to others. It also serves as an educational tool to expose community members to ideas and images they may not have considered. The heart of the survey is a public presentation or two in which a series of photographic images of various development features including buildings, streets and parking,

sidewalks, civic amenities, landscaping, open spaces, and signs are shown to an audience and rated on survey forms. Such images will include both local and non-local examples of development features. In all, about two hundred photographic images will be projected.

Prior to their preparation of the final set of images, the consultant team of Walter Magdziarz and Chuck Hanlon will perform fieldwork in our area to compile a photographic inventory. Then they would like to present a preview of the survey to the Council and Plan Commission for comment and evaluation. They will be interested in knowing if the collection of images is expansive enough and they will want to be sure that all conceivable land use or development issues have been covered. In other words, they do not want their preferences to dictate the range of responses from the general public.

Toward this end, a joint meeting of the Plan Commission and City Council will be held in the Sycamore Public Library during the regular Plan Commission meeting time and date in November.