

TO: The Sycamore Plan Commission

FROM: Bill Nicklas
City Administrator

DATE: March 6, 2002

RE: March 11, 2002 Plan Commission Meeting

The Plan Commission agenda includes one action item and two workshop items.

I Action Item

A. Consideration of a Petition from Barbara Louis Messinger and Dan Jahns, co-Trustees of Trust No. 100, and Wiseman-Hughes Enterprises, Inc. for an Annexation Agreement, Annexation and Rezoning, and Preliminary Plat and Plan Approval for a Planned Unit Development at the Northeast Corner of Bethany Road and Somonauk Street.

The petitioners wish to annex a 203.18-acre parcel known as the Jahns farm. The developer, Wiseman-Hughes Enterprises, Inc., intends to create a planned unit development that primarily features "R-1" One Family Residence zoning with detached single-family homes, with the exception of a 5.7-acre area to be zoned "C-1" Neighborhood Commercial, adjacent to the intersection of Bethany Road and Somonauk Street. The development which will be known as "The Enclave at Reston Ponds" was first discussed in a Plan Commission workshop meeting on January 14, 2002. The proposed terms, conditions, and plan for the new development are variously described in the annexation agreement, preliminary plat, zoning plan, and landscape plan which are attached for the Commission's review.

The Commission is well aware that the proposed planned unit development falls entirely within the Bethany Road Regional Planning Area. The intent of the regional plan is to

- Encourage an attractive entryway to the City;
- Protect existing, contiguous neighborhoods from dissimilar uses and structures with elaborate transitional buffers;
- Establish corridors for major collector streets that provide efficient access to Bethany Road and Somonauk Street while minimizing the impact of through traffic on existing neighborhoods;

- Incorporate parks and recreational space within easy walking and biking distance of new dwelling units;
- Link major open spaces within the planning area to the Sycamore Community Park through bike paths and a variety of walkways.
- Encourage construction of regional retention facilities with capacities appreciably in excess of minimum subdivision requirements.
- Foster cooperation among landowners within the planning area and encourage cooperation between landowners and interested developers.

The following analysis approaches the preliminary plan and annexation agreement with these purposes in mind:

1. The Plan.

- a) Overall Area. The plan depicts a development of 203.18 acres.
- b) Density. The density of the residentially zoned area is 1.98 units per acre (391 sf units/197.5 acres). The allowable density of the area is three (3) units per acre.
- c) Single-Family Homes. A total of 391 single family detached homes are planned. The average lot size is 10,800 square feet.
- d) Transitional lot sizes. The critical transition points are at the northwest, north, and northeast corners of the development area. The adjacent lot sizes are not shown, as the Commission suggested at the January meeting. More information is needed on this question to satisfy the Commission and staff concerns. With respect to the area abutting the Grand Victorian parcel, the elongated lots depicted on the concept plan presented to the Commission in January have been eliminated by re-aligning Fulton Lane with Wild Street. This shortened the depth of Lots 195-198 in a more conventional and complimentary way.
- e) Commercial Uses. In terms of uses, the 5.7-acre commercial corner would be constrained by the Regional Plan. No variances from these uses have been requested. The uses identified in the Regional Plan include the following: antique shops, beauty shops, drug stores, florist shops, gift or novelty shops, ice cream shops, professional laundries, convenience grocery stores without gasoline sales and service, professional offices, and day care centers. The Commission will note that the developer has reduced the size of the commercially-zoned area from the allowable maximum of 12 acres.
- f) Park Space. Two park areas are shown that the developer wishes to dedicate to the Park District. One is the large central park area of 12.54 acres (Lot 399 on the preliminary plan). The other is a 2.5-acre site shown as Lot 404, which would connect with the 2-acre park space in Krpan's Parkside Estates plan.
- g) Bike Paths. A bike path is shown that runs northward from the intersection of Bethany Road and Somonauk Street along the east side of the drainage easement to a point north of Lot 156, then eastward across the subdivision to the Fenstermaker property. This path will eventually link with the bike path required in the Krpan subdivision. The developer is in discussion with the Sycamore Park Board about the dedication of this path and adjacent easement to the Park District for long-term public use and maintenance. This bike path

will serve a regional purpose. It will eventually be linked with the DeKalb Sycamore bikeway that presently ends in the Prairie Business Park, and with the Great Western Trail to the east via bikeways through the Krpan subdivision and the Sycamore Community Park. Whether or not the bike path will feature lights is a matter that will be addressed with the Park District.

- h) Single-Loaded Street. As recommended by the Regional Plan, the proposed preliminary plan depicts a single-loaded street (Fulton Lane) featuring detached single-family homes. The attached rendering of the appearance of the homes on this street understates the broad porches and gable roofs of the historic Somonauk Street corridor.
- i) 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 release from the Bethany Road regional detention pond. At this writing, City Engineer John Brady is still working out the precise requirements for the storage capacity with Wiseman-Hughes. The Commission will note that the drainage ponds and drainage easements are numbered as lots (Lots 392-406). Lot 399 might be used for park space, but would be privately maintained because its drainage role will limit its usefulness during rain events.
- j) Landscaping. A tree-planting plan is attached. The development will feature a landscaped median at the main entrances off Bethany Road (Reston Boulevard) and Somonauk Street (Becker Place). The proposed landscaped median on Waterman Drive (name to be changed) should be removed because of the difficulties posed for snowplowing on the curve.
- k) Somonauk Street widening and reconstruction. The east side of Somonauk Street will be widened to include 12-foot turn lanes. Additional right-of-way to a point 50 feet from the street centerline shall be dedicated with additional right-of-way at the intersection of Bethany Road and Somonauk Street.
- l) Bethany Road widening and reconstruction. The developer is also responsible for widening and reconstructing Bethany Road to a width of 41 feet back-to-back of curb, except for widening at the intersection of Bethany Road and Somonauk Street. A recapture scheme is introduced in the annexation agreement to establish a fair means to gain financial assistance from future developers of adjacent properties. The City staff are agreeable to removing the arbitrary time limit of five years on this scheme.
- m) Traffic signals. The developer will install signals at the corner of Bethany Road and Somonauk Street as warranted.
- n) Water systems. As with previous development plans for this area, the proposed plan would accomplish a looping of the water main system that will improve the quality of water for the east end of town.
- o) 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.
- p) The Subdivision name. At the January Plan Commission meeting, the proposed name of the subdivision—"The Enclave at Sanbourne"—was criticized by the staff and Commission for having no obvious link to the

community’s past. The new name of the subdivision—“The Enclave at Reston Ponds”—does have a link with Sycamore’s history. Pamela Schawel of Wiseman-Hughes spent some time at the Joiner History Room and learned that one of the City’s most prominent historical figures was William Fulton, who served as an Illinois Supreme Court Justice. His daughter, Sally Reston, was married to Scott Reston, the former publisher of the New York Times. Although her husband never lived in Sycamore, Sally grew up in Sycamore and regularly corresponded with friends in the City during the 1940s and 1950s, recounting her travels and observations of world events. Some of the subdivision’s street names (e.g. Boynton, Brower, Thurow) are drawn from Sycamore’s history as well. Several—Elmwood and Waterman—will need to be changed to prevent confusion with existing streets.

The table below portrays the land uses described in the proposed plan:

Single-Family Homes	97.65 Acres
Park Sites	17.81 Acres
Bike Pathways	1.75 Acres
Ponds and Detention	35.53 Acres
Landscape Buffers	3.98 Acres
Neighborhood Retail	5.05 Acres
Right of Way	41.41 Acres
Total	203.18 Acres

2. The Annexation Agreement.

The long list of changes identified in the staff letter of February 28 has generally been resolved to the staff’s satisfaction, but a revised annexation agreement showing such changes was not received from the developer prior to the mailing of the Commission’s packet. The points of departure from present policy or standards are addressed in “Variations,” below.

The developer will petition the Park Board for annexation on March 19. The Park Board reviewed the concept plan for the development at its February meeting but no decision was made regarding annexation.

3. Traffic Study.

As John Brady explains in the attached memorandum, Intech Consultants of Downers Grove completed a traffic impact study for the developer. The firm projected 3700 vehicles per day from the residential zoned area and 2200 vehicles per day from the small commercial zone once the development is completed. It is the staff’s opinion that the consultant overestimated the traffic to and from the commercial site, with the limited variety of uses allowed in that area in order to reduce traffic. About 36% of the traffic would travel to and from the Becker Place intersection, and 32% from the Reston Boulevard intersection with Bethany Road. The internal traffic would be widely distributed over the thirteen streets with access to the development area.

4. Fiscal Impact Study.

The City Administrator completed a fiscal impact study using the proposed new impact fees and updated assumptions based on recent City and School budgets. The development is projected to have a positive fiscal impact on City finances, but a negative fiscal impact on School finances. The negative annual fiscal impact in terms of the School District is largely due to the pace of new construction projected for the development (i.e. 75 homes per year, on average).

5. Variations From Policy or Past Practice.

The initial draft of the annexation agreement arrived on February 22 along with the preliminary plan and most of the exhibits. A detailed critique of the preliminary plan and annexation agreement was mailed on February 28 (see attached). Since that time, the developer's team and the City staff have had a number of conversations about the items in that staff review. At this writing, a few differences remain. The developer has also proposed a few departures from policy or prior practice. These matters are addressed in topical fashion below:

- a) Street widths. Wiseman-Hughes has requested 31-foot street widths for all streets with the exception of the main entrance collectors. The City staff have only supported the narrower width on Fulton Lane, which is the single-loaded street facing Somonauk Street. Narrower streets certainly reduce the City's financial liability for street maintenance, but the trade-off is the aggravation and anxiety posed by narrower driving lanes through neighborhoods with parking on both sides, especially during the snow season. If parking is restricted to one side, the vehicle lanes increase in width but the likelihood of adequate, nearby guest parking is reduced. These are concerns that every City faces and would be suitable for a wider debate. For the present, the City staff would prefer to remain consistent with the public street standards required of all recent developments (e.g. B&B, Krpan).
- b) Impact Fees. For a number of years, approved annexation agreements have imposed fees that are generally applicable to all properties within the City, which assumes that they may change from time to time. The developer would abide by the new system of fees recently approved by City Council resolution and soon to be acted upon by the applicable local taxing bodies. However, the developer would prefer to lock these fees for the next five years, after which any increases would evenly fall across all unbuilt lots.
- c) Storm Water Storage Requirements. The City Engineer and the engineering consultants for the developer (Intech Consultants) agree on the need to double the storage capacity but at this writing are not agreed on the standard for determining such a capacity. This may be resolved by the meeting of March 11.
- d) Traffic Signals. In consideration of the fact that the need for traffic signals at the intersection at Bethany Road and Somonauk Street may not be established until well after the proposed development is completed, the developer has asked if it would be possible to pay the City Engineer's estimation of the current value today, and let the funds accrue interest, rather than be on the hook until well after the project is completed.

- e) **Commercial Zoning.** The developer will ask the Commission for an allowance to rezone the commercially-zoned area to “R-1” One Family Residence if no commercial users are found after five years. This option is supported by the staff.
- f) **“Sycamore Look.”** The developer raised some interesting points regarding the look we desire along Somonauk Street. It is safe to say that the City’s Regional Plan did not welcome a row of look-alike Victorians out of sync with other nearby homes. It is also safe to say that we feel strongly that the look of the single-loaded street should make a strong statement about historic Sycamore. The developer wishes to cooperate on this point. Wiseman-Hughes offers home packages with “add-ons” such as front porches, extra-wide garages, etc. Shall the developer insist that buyers of all seventeen lots facing Somonauk pay extra for Victorian features? How many classic Victorian facades would be enough?

6. Recommendation.

A number of details are still unresolved at this writing. The developer has acceded to nearly all the changes requested of the annexation agreement and the preliminary plan in the staff letter of February 28—with the exception of the variations noted above. Most of these details were resolved at a meeting of the parties on March 6, leaving no time for the preparation of a revised annexation agreement prior to the mailing of this informational packet on March 7.

Going into the meeting of March 11, the Commission can trust that the parties are cooperatively working toward agreement. The discussion before the Plan Commission on the proposed variations will determine the final shape of the subdivision and the terms and conditions of its annexation. At this juncture, it is not possible for the staff to commit to an unconditional approval of the package of plans and agreements. If all outstanding differences are resolved at the Commission level on March 11, it would be possible to forward the annexation agreement and plan to the Council for approval on March 18, contingent upon any necessary revisions to the plan and text as well as the Park Board’s decision to annex.

If substantial differences remain after the developer’s presentation on March 11, the Commission could hold over any action on the petition until they were resolved at the staff level.

II Workshop Item

A. Consideration of a Concept Plan Submitted by John Castle Builders, LLC for a Townhouse Development at the Southwest Corner of Plank Road and Airport Road Extended.

John Castle Builders, LLC has requested a workshop discussion of a concept plan for the development of the 7.6 acre “tip” of the Heron Creek development, near the intersection of Plank Road and the future Airport Road extension. This area was annexed in March 1999 and zoned “R-3” Multiple Family Residence with a special use permit restricting the uses to attached townhouses. Nevertheless, under the terms of that annexation, the

actual development could not proceed before the approval of a development plan, following a public hearing. Prior to a formal hearing on his concept, Mr. Castle would appreciate the Commission's suggestions and observations.

The attached concept plan depicts 45 townhomes with a density of about 6 units per acre, which is well within the allowable density parameters for "R-3" zoning. In addition to the two off-street parking spaces per townhouse unit, forty-nine (49) additional guest parking spaces are provided.

The Commission may wish to comment on the driveway connections to Heron Creek Drive. These connections would provide the appearance that one observes as one drives along Foxpointe Drive past the townhouses that Mr. Castle has built there. Although each townhouse would not generate many daily trips, the numerous curb cuts may prompt an abundance of caution, particularly since they are not far removed from the future access to Airport Road. In addition, the array of front-loaded garages in tight formation may not be aesthetically desirable. Some adjustments could be made to retain the same number of units with access to an interior private drive.

All common areas including the landscaped berms and private drives would be maintained by a homeowners association created within the parameters of the model described in the Zoning Code, Section 13.10.12.

Other topics for discussion might include the future use for the undeveloped parcel to the east and whether or not a traffic study is in order (the code calls for a study if the number of trips per day exceeds 300—the likely upper limit for such a development).

Plan Commission direction is requested.

B. Consideration of an Administration Recommendation to Begin Discussion of a Sub-Area Plan for the Land Area Northeast and Northwest of the Intersection of Plank Road and Airport Road Extended.

Recently, large farm parcels in the City's northeast planning area, outside the present corporate limits, have been purchased by firms interested in residential development. Other nearby farms are the focus of increasing interest and may soon be optioned. It is time to develop a long-range plan for this prime development area. The City's proposed FY2003 Budget, which begins on May 1, has committed funds for planning assistance. The Administration recommends a process akin to that followed in the development of the Bethany Road Regional Plan. Beginning in April or May, some general discussions facilitated by a professional planning consultant might help the Commission focus its thinking. The mapping of the area with respect to land use, regional retention, park space, integrated pedestrian and vehicle pathways, etc. and the preparation of a provisional plan text would follow.

Plan Commission direction is recommended.