

TO: The Sycamore Plan Commission

FROM: Bill Nicklas
City Administrator

DATE: January 8, 2003

RE: January 13, 2003 Plan Commission Meeting

The Plan Commission agenda has two workshop items. **We will meet at the Sycamore Library for our meeting on January 13 at 7:00 p.m.** because we anticipate a large turnout to discuss the results of the image preference survey and the charrette. Subtracting our staff, the consultant team, Plan Commissioners, Council members, the City Treasurer and the City Clerk, sixty-two (62) residents participated in the image preference survey at the Library on January 7.

I Workshop Items

A. Consideration of a Concept Plan Submitted by Farm & Fleet and Territorial Development of Batavia for a Rezoning of a 4.64-Acre Parcel on Hathaway Drive.

Bob Blain, principal owner of Farm & Fleet, has requested direction from the Plan Commission with respect to a 4.64-acre in-fill lot, Lot #5, in the Farm & Fleet subdivision. He has been approached by a townhouse developer, Territorial Development of Batavia, that is interested in developing the parcel for residential purposes. The present zoning of the parcel is "C-3" Highway Business.

The Commission will find several attached documents for reference. One exhibit shows the entire subdivision with the as-yet undeveloped lots. Another shows a more detailed view of the portion of the subdivision surrounding Lot #5. In addition, the Commission will find a colored site plan showing the proposed multiple-family use along with conceptual elevations of the proposed townhouses.

Mr. Blain is prompted to investigate the possibility of a rezoning from "C-3" to "R-3" Multiple Family with a special use for townhouses because the lot has scarcely attracted any commercial interest since the annexation in 1992. The main reason for the lack of interest is the lack of visibility. The lot is remote from the Peace Road frontage, and when

Lot 4A that abuts Peace Road and is adjacent to the Country Inn & Suites is developed, Lot 5 will not be noticed. This circumstance seriously limits the appeal of Lot 5 for commercial retail activity. Although it may theoretically be more attractive for commercial office uses, no serious development interest of that sort has materialized either.

The proposed use is consistent with the townhouse development to the east and northeast, and a residential use would be more compatible with the single-family residential development to the south. The principal reason for retaining the “C-3” zoning is the City’s general concern to promote more commercial development. In this particular case, the general consideration may not be practical in terms of market interest. In addition, now that the Farm & Fleet subdivision and the Foxpointe subdivision have grown together and a substantial number of residences have been established to the east and south, a number of the allowable “C-3” uses (see the attached zoning code excerpts) would not be compatible.

If the Commission believes a rezoning would be reasonable, direction regarding the proposed density and layout of the development is requested. The concept is unique in a number of respects. It takes a higher density and weaves in a variety of landscape features and special paving techniques to soften that density. Additionally, it offers a variety of rooflines and disguises the garages by orienting them toward an internal system of private driveways very much like traditional urban alleys. Floor plans and pricing details are missing from the concept design and should be scrutinized to further assess the market to be served. Guest parking spaces may be adequate in number but are not proximate to units 21 through 40. The actual gross area devoted to open space is not clear.

The developer is attempting to address some urban design issues that have recently been the focus of our planning efforts, albeit on a small scale. Given the location of this commercially zoned parcel off the beaten retail path and the proximity of townhomes to the east, the staff are not opposed to the rezoning interest, but are eager for the Commission’s direction on design and density.

Plan Commission direction is requested.

B. Consideration of a Report from Land Vision Concerning the Results of the Image Preference Survey and Charrette.

Once the Commission has reviewed the first workshop item, the balance of the evening will be devoted to the consensus of thought and imagery that evolves from the image preference survey and charrette. The Land Vision staff, including Chuck Hanlon, Walter Magdziarz, and Mahander Vasandani, will be present to summarize the popular effort at the January 7 and January 11 events.

As we look forward, it will be useful to assess our planning performance and growth over the past three years. The first two chapters of the Comp Plan have been updated to provide the Commission with some quantitative background. The textual changes are not final, and have been drafted to spur further discussion.