

TO: The Sycamore Plan Commission

FROM: Bill Nicklas
City Manager

DATE: March 3, 2004

RE: March 8, 2004 Plan Commission Meeting

The Plan Commission has one action item and four workshop items on its regular agenda.

I. Action Items

A. Consideration of a Petition from R.A. Fagenal Builders for a Final Plat for Phase I of the North Grove Crossing Planned Development.

The North Grove Crossing preliminary plat was approved on June 16, 2003. The preliminary plat was revised on January 19, 2004. The revisions included a reconfiguration of the relationship between the house lots on Samuel Alden Drive and the Kocher farmstead, which the Comp Plan depicts as a commercial-zoned area when and if it is annexed at a future date. In addition, a separate preliminary plan was presented for the townhouse development abutting Luther Lowell Drive.

This final plat concerns slightly less than one-half of the single-family detached portion of the North Grove Crossing development. A total of 164 detached single family homes were shown on the preliminary plat. The attached final plat depicts 75 single family lots as well as one common area reserved for storm water detention (Lot 201) and one common area reserved for detention and a 6.35-acre park space (Lot 202).

In terms of permit timing, the development was approved under the provisions of Ordinance 2003.04, which limits the permitting of dwelling units to a percentage of the total units on the preliminary plan. A later growth management tool, Ordinance 2003.65, passed on November 17, 2003 adds another layer of regulation that defers permitting until a prescribed time period has elapsed, but does not apply retroactively. According to the provisions of Ordinance 2003.04, the planned development of 274 units may annually receive permits for 50 homes, or 20%, whichever is greater. The City staff's residential "timeline" (attached) anticipates some construction later in 2005 after the substantial

rough grading, utility installation, storm water detention, and road construction is completed on site.

The plat conforms to the City's codes and ordinances and the staff recommends a favorable Plan Commission recommendation.

II. Workshop Items

A. Second Consideration of a Conceptual Development Plan from Gracious Living Homes LLC for the Development of an 18.66-Acre Portion of the Strong Farm for a Residential Development to Serve Persons Aged 55 and Older.

At the last Plan Commission meeting of February 9, Gigi Walker of Gracious Living Homes presented a concept for the residential development of about 19 acres of the Strong Farm, west of the City's detention pond and beginning at a point about 275 feet south of the Bethany Road right-of-way (see the attached site plan). The petitioner proposed to set aside the Bethany Road frontage for commercial or office/research purposes, and to build a residential neighborhood south of that frontage targeting persons 55 and older.

In her presentation, Ms. Walker described the following features of her firm's concept plan:

- ◆ A reservation of about 3 acres on the Bethany Road frontage for commercial office uses.
- ◆ A modest residential area of 12.86 acres.
- ◆ A main entrance that links the commercial and residential areas to Bethany Road.
- ◆ 80 attached townhomes (or twenty, 4-unit buildings) for a density of 6.22 units per gross acre.
- ◆ A 2,400 square foot community center.
- ◆ An emphasis on gardens and walking paths within the residential area.
- ◆ A variety of townhome plans with a price range of \$160,000 to \$200,000.

A number of commissioners noted the need for more affordable senior living options in the Sycamore area and the general layout was favorably received, but some reservations were expressed about the adequacy of guest parking, snow storage areas, and emergency access. However, the principal concern was whether the City would be well-advised to consider a departure from the Comp Plan's designation of the entire Strong farm for commercial office or research uses. At the end of the meeting, the chair suggested that an analysis of the comparative fiscal impact of a commercial office and senior residential use should be undertaken. Ms. Walker mentioned that her company has performed similar analyses in the past and she would be willing to do so for the proposed Sycamore project.

Ms. Walker promptly submitted such an analysis and will present her findings for the Commission's review (see attached). Her conclusion is that given the City's commercial preference along the adjacent Bethany Road frontage for commercial office uses versus commercial retail uses, the gross economic return to the community from a senior adult community would be substantially greater than a commercial office use that comprises a

comparable land area. While one could debate the numbers attributed to EAV and construction values per square foot, Ms. Walker's overall conclusion is defensible. With the addition of per capita income tax and sales tax revenue, and the lack of any demand for School services, the senior residential use will typically create a positive impact. In the "what if" department, it should be noted that the City would not welcome a retail center at this particular location on the Bethany Road corridor because of the potential conflict with the neighboring residential subdivision, as well as broader issues associated with the diffusion of commercial activity outside the downtown and other established retail corridors.

The City Manager recommends another look at Ms. Walker's assessment and a reconsideration of the land use preference for the interior portion of the Strong farm parcel, particularly if both the Bethany Road and the Somonauk Road frontages would remain available for commercial office uses.

B. Second Consideration of a Conceptual Development Plan Presented by George Haviar for 97 Acres North of Bethany Road, to the East of the Entrance to Krpan's Parkside Estates.

At the January 12 Plan Commission meeting, Mr. Haviar of Pacific Midwest Homes (St. Charles) presented a concept plan for the development of a 96-acre parcel presently owned by Tom and Joan Fenstermaker. The parcel lies just east of Parkside Drive as it is extended northward from Bethany Road. About 67 acres could be developed; approximately 28 acres lie within the floodplain and cannot be developed.

The original concept plan showed 87 single family lots with road access to the Krpan P.U.D. as anticipated in the Krpan preliminary plan and the Southeast Sub-Area Plan. The average lot size—11,403 square feet—was comparable to the average size of the lots in the adjacent portion of the Krpan plan (which are 90' x 127' or 11,430 square feet). The land use was also consistent with the 2003 Comp Plan and the 2001 Southeast Area Plan, and the general design was consistent with the subregional planning of 2001. However, a number of issues were raised by the concept plan. First, the delineation of the floodplain fringe in relation to the proposed lots raised concerns about development in the floodplain. The plan anticipated that the east ditch line would be dug substantially deeper to remove a number of lots from the floodplain, and to provide adequate detention volume outside the floodplain.

Second, some Commissioners expressed the concern that the layout of house lots on the east side of the parcel would inhibit the view of the nearby Kishwaukee River (the east branch of the south branch) from the interior of the development.

Third, there was reluctance to consider another development in light of the City's projected permit timeline. According to the City's new regulatory guidelines, this particular plan would yield a maximum of 35 units per year, if ultimately approved, and no permits would be allowed for one year from the date of the approval. With reference to the timeline for all known and pending residential developments (see attached), the

next year in which additional units might be comfortably absorbed in terms of fiscal capacity is well beyond 2005.

Since the January meeting, Mr. Haviar has re-considered his plan and has also discussed it with School Superintendent Bob Hammon and Park Director David Peek. The plan before the Commission has been substantially reworked as follows:

- Two viewing corridors have been added at the end of Schmidt Lane and at the northeast corner of the parcel.
- The number of lots has been reduced to 79.
- At the suggestion of the School Superintendent, 18.21 acres would be donated for a future elementary school site at the southeast corner of the property.
- At the suggestion of the Park Director, 45.52 acres would be donated for passive recreation and nature trails.
- The average lot size has been increased from 11,403 square feet to 12,895 square feet to better align with the lot sizes of the Parkside Estates P.U.D. to the west.
- The developer has pledged \$5,000 per single family lot in voluntary contributions to the School District, over and above the required impact fees.

The Commission will be asked for direction on the following questions, among others:

- ◆ From a land planning perspective, does the plan meet the expectations of the Comp Plan and sound planning principles?
- ◆ Are the developmental exactions sufficient to satisfy ongoing concerns about the fiscal impact of residential development?
- ◆ If the proposed development were approved, would the regulatory constraint on permits for one year (until sometime in 2005) be sufficient in light of the expected pace of permits in that year? Does the School District and Park District accommodation with the developer remove some of the reluctance to consider the proposed annexation in terms of fiscal impact?

Plan Commission direction is recommended.

C. Consideration of a Concept Plan from R.A. Fagenal Builders for a Planned Residential Development on the Walters and Cambier Farms North of the Intersection of Peace Road and Brickville Road.

David Fagenal, a principal of R.A. Fagenal Builders, has submitted a concept plan for the development of single family homes on the Walters and Cambier Farms which are located north of Peace Road and east of Brickville Road. The combined farm parcels constitute about 85 acres. Mr. Fagenal proposes to build 171 single family detached homes on these combined farm parcels. The price range for these homes would be \$250,000 to \$300,000.

The area in question traverses two types of land use on the City's Comp Plan: rural residential and neighborhood, low-density urban residential. The developer's concept does not make a distinction in terms of lot sizing in these two development areas. Other issues presented by the plan include access (the attached concept is unclear about the

connection to Brickville Road); Park and School dedications (or cash in lieu of same); cul-de-sacs; etc.

The most important question, in terms of growth management, is when the first permits would be issued. Ordinance 2003.65 would allow the first permits two years after the annexation was approved. That would put the first permits in 2006, when an estimated 559 residential units of all types could be permitted (see attached timeline). The developer has proposed a delay until 2009. As the City Manager recommended with respect to the Neumann Homes proposal at the February 9 Plan Commission meeting, an additional delay should be considered if an annexation is contemplated. Allowing for some “sliding” of estimated permit activity beyond today’s projections as a result of unforeseen market dynamics, the next year that permits from a new subdivision might be comfortably issued in terms of the service capacity of local taxing bodies is 2012.

Plan Commission direction is requested.

D. Consideration of an Administration Presentation Regarding a New Unified Development Ordinance.

The adoption of the DeKalb County Unified Comprehensive Plan in January was the prelude to further initiatives by the County’s individual municipalities in merging their planning, zoning, and development regulations into a uniform text. Land Vision, Inc., the planning firm that assisted County municipalities in their preparation of new or revised comprehensive plans in 2003, prepared a model format for such development texts. This format is not binding, but represents a synthesis of many different approaches taken by cities across the country, and reported in planning journals over the past few years. The City of Sycamore has reviewed this model and is creatively adapting it to the unique documentary record that has long been the corpus of the community’s development guidelines. These documents include the Zoning Code and a variety of specific development regulations in the City Code that affect the installation of public infrastructure.

Plan Commission members have received a first and incomplete draft of a “City of Sycamore Unified Development Ordinance” along with their meeting packet. To complete the draft that was distributed, some final sections of Chapter 6 will be needed to address signage, off-street parking, engineering requirements for public infrastructure, and floodplain regulations. These final sections should be ready for review in April or May. The purpose of distributing the document in its current form is to introduce the Commission to the range of topics that are covered, the integrating format, and some novel graphics and tables which will hopefully make the codes more “friendly” to the reader.

The first in-depth discussion of the draft Unified Development Ordinance will occur at the Plan Commission meeting on April 12. At that time, the City Manager would like to cover Chapters 1, 2, and 3.