

TO: The Sycamore Plan Commission

FROM: Bill Nicklas  
City Manager

DATE: May 5, 2004

RE: May 10, 2004 Plan Commission Meeting

The Plan Commission has two action items and three workshop items on its regular agenda. Much of the information on the developments to be discussed on the action and the workshop agendas arrived in the City Manager's office on May 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. The agenda, as usual, is published early on Thursday morning (the 6<sup>th</sup>). In the time available, the City Manager reviewed the relevant written submittals with as much care as possible.

## **I. Action Items**

### **A. Consideration of a Petition from Pacific Midwest Homes for an Annexation Agreement, Annexation, Rezoning and Preliminary Plat for "The Settlement" Planned Unit Development.**

In behalf of Pacific Midwest Homes, Mr. Haviar last appeared before the Plan Commission on March 8 in a workshop session. The concept plan he presented to the Commission in March concerned the 96.275-acre Fenstermaker parcel just east of the intersection of Parkside Drive and Bethany Road. His plan had the following features:

- Two viewing corridors: one at the end of Hanna Lane and one at the northeast corner of the parcel (to the east of the unnamed "Street D" on the attached plat).
- The number of lots had been reduced from 87 to 79.
- The average lot size was 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.
- At the suggestion of the School Superintendent, 18.20 acres would be donated for a future elementary school site at the southeast corner of the property, and the developer agreed to pay the school impact fees as they might change from time to time.
- At the suggestion of the Sycamore Park Director, 45.32 acres would be dedicated for passive recreation and nature trails.

One outstanding issue concerned the pace of the development, if approved. After some discussion, the Commission chair recommended, and the Commission supported, the notion that a reasonable pace could be negotiated between the developer and the City Manager, for presentation to the Commission the next time it considered the Haviar proposal. If this matter could be resolved, the Commission appeared inclined to support the residential development of this infill area in light of the developer's extraordinary voluntary contributions to the School and Park Districts.

Regarding the pace of development in his proposed subdivision, Mr. Haviar's proposal of March 9 (see attached) suggests more units in the first year of development (35 homes) and a lower number (22 homes) in the second and third years of development. The developer proposes to begin construction in 2005, according to the provisions of Ordinance 2003.65.

The developer now appears with an annexation agreement, a preliminary plan, and a plat of annexation for the Commission's consideration. The details are as follows:

#### 1. The Preliminary Plan

- As noted above, the plan depicts 79 detached single-family lots comprising 23.44 acres of the approximately 96 acres in the annexation parcel.
- The gross density is .82 units per acre, which is considerably less dense than the 2 unit per acre average of the past few years.
- The proposed subdivision name is "The Settlement."
- The portion (Outlot A) to be donated to the Park District for nature trails constitutes 45.32 acres.
- The portion (Outlot B) to be donated to the School District for a possible school site comprises 18.20 acres.
- Access to the subdivision from the south would enter Parkside Drive at Bethany Road and move into the development area on one of two public streets (Joan Place and Hanna Lane).
- Access to the subdivision from the north would likewise approach the development area from Parkside Drive.
- The stormwater detention pond wraps around the east boundary of the area to be developed for residential purposes.

#### 2. The Annexation Agreement

The annexation agreement has the following features:

- A twenty year term.
- The requirement of a concurrent Park District annexation.
- All watermains shall be properly looped at the developer's expense.
- The portion of Bethany Road adjacent to the developable area (the westerly 450 feet) will be reconstructed by the developer during the first phase to a minimum width of 41 feet measured from back to back of the curbing. The School District will be responsible for the cost of the road improvements along the balance of the Bethany Road frontage.

- Model homes must be served by city utilities and paved temporary parking before they are occupied.
  - The developer will donate about 45 acres of land (Outlot A) to the Sycamore Park District, in exchange for which no impact fees will be assessed. Based on the current Park District impact fee ordinance, the developer's obligation for a land dedication for 79 homes with an average of 3.5 persons per home is 3.18 acres. At the Park District rate of \$75,000 per acre, such a dedication would be valued at \$238,500. The developer has instead agreed to donate the land with a statutory value of \$3,399,000 (\$75,000 x 45.32 acres). If impact fees were requested instead of the land donation, the Park would only receive \$62,252 (\$788 x 79).
  - The developer will donate about 19 acres (Outlot B) to the Sycamore School District for a future school site. In addition, the developer will be responsible for all applicable impact fees as well as a voluntary contribution of \$750 per lot. Based on a value of \$100,000 per acre in the School Fee Ordinance and an average of 4 bedrooms per home, the total developer exactions will be worth about \$2,355,277.
  - The developer shall make a voluntary contribution of \$750 per lot to the City of Sycamore to help offset the cost of City services.
  - The developer shall install bike paths as shown on the preliminary plat to link the entrance to the conservation area at the northeast corner of the parcel. The paths shall be 10 feet wide and their maintenance shall be the responsibility of the homeowners association.
  - The developer would be limited to a maximum of 35 permits in year one, and 22 permits per year in years two and three.
  - A homeowners association is required to maintain the common areas.
3. Fiscal Impact. The attached fiscal study depicts the impact of the proposed subdivision without an allowance for the proposed developer exactions. It is clear that with the donation of the land and the agreement to pay both the statutory impact fees and a voluntary contribution per lot, the development will generate a positive return to the School District. The City of Sycamore will see a modest positive impact in terms of general revenues even if the impact fees are not considered.
4. Traffic Study. See attached. The study shows an estimated ADT of 835 vehicles per day. This estimate conforms to the engineering standard of about 10 trips per day per single-family house.

**Recommendation:**

Because of the extraordinary developer contributions to the Park District, School District, and the City of Sycamore, the City Manager recommends favorable Plan Commission action on this infill property, even though the proposed homes would all be permitted within the 2005 to 2007 period of heightened permit activity.

**B. Consideration of a Petition from Gracious Living Homes for an Annexation Agreement, Annexation, Rezoning, and Preliminary Plat for Property Near the Southwest Corner of Bethany Road and Somonauk Street.**

Gracious Living Homes, represented by Gigi Walker, last appeared before the Plan Commission in March during a workshop session to discuss a concept for a residential development of about 19 acres targeting persons 55 years of age and older. Based on a straw poll of the Commissioners present, 6 of 9 members felt the concept would be an acceptable use, provided that

- a) both the Bethany Road and Somonauk Street frontages would be reserved for commercial office zoning;
- b) the development plan would be refined to assure the easy navigation of the proposed interior private streets by emergency vehicles;
- c) adequate guest parking would be provided.

The development firm has returned with a formal petition for annexation with an annexation agreement, annexation plat, and preliminary plat intended to satisfy the Commission's concerns. The details are as follows:

1. Preliminary Plan

- The plan area comprises 16.79 acres, including about 3 acres of commercially-zoned property.
- The entire plan area shall be zoned "C-4," Mixed Use, Commercial Business District. The Commission will recall that the "C-4" district was created with the Comp Plan of 2000 and maintained in the Comp Plan of 2003 to accommodate planned unit developments that feature low-impact commercial uses that serve, or are adjacent to, housing units such as the type proposed in this plan. "C-4" districts also feature some type of "community" facility, such as the clubhouse proposed by the developer. Since the zoning goes with the land, the City staff felt the "C-4" designation was a better fit with respect to the Comp Plan's designation of commercial uses for the area.
- The gross density is 4.76 units per acre. A total of eighty (80) attached townhouses are featured in the residential area.
- Access to the residential use would be through the commercial zoning along the Bethany Road frontage. All streets south of the Bethany Road right-of-way serving the property shall be private streets maintained by a homeowner's association.

2. Annexation Agreement

The annexation agreement has the following features:

- A twenty year term.
- The requirement of a concurrent Park District annexation.
- All watermains shall be properly looped at the developer's expense.
- The developer shall be responsible for fifty percent (50%) of the reconstruction of the portion of Bethany Road that is adjacent to the subject property. The roadway shall be widened to a width of forty-one feet (41') measured from back-to-back of the curbing. The developer's share of the

cost will be obligated in the form of a letter of credit that will be updated annually.

- No occupancies will be permitted until the interior roadways are improved with at least the base course of asphalt at a thickness approved by the City Engineer.
  - The developer shall make a cash donation to the Park District as required by Ordinance.
  - The developer requests a variance from the land-cash ordinance provisions defined by the revised School Fee Ordinance in view of the age-related restrictions on ownership in the complex.
  - The developer agrees to comply with Ordinance 2003.65 regarding the timing of building permits. If approved, the developer would have to wait one year before any permits could be issued.
3. Fiscal Impact. The attached fiscal study depicts the impact of the proposed subdivision without the inclusion of the requisite developer exactions. Because no school children are expected, there is a positive impact on the School District. The City of Sycamore would see a modest positive impact as well.
4. Traffic Study. The study shows an estimated ADT of 709 vehicles per day, including traffic from the potential commercial uses along the Bethany Road frontage. The estimate for the townhouses alone (289 ADT) is well below the engineering standard for condominium/townhouses owing to the unique demographics of the development.

Recommendation:

As the attached article from the March 17, 2004 Chicago Tribune suggests, developments of this type can be a “win-win” prospect for a community in terms of their fiscal impact and the option they offer to senior citizens who are looking to escape a variety of housekeeping responsibilities. The center of the debate for Sycamore has been the proposed location of this concept.

Reasons for the approval of this plan include:

- The developer’s agreement to reserve the Bethany Road and Somonauk Street frontages for commercial purposes and the relative scarcity of senior-oriented housing in our development area.
- The developer’s acquiescence in a “C-4” commercial zoning.
- The small scale of the residential use, 12.86 acres, which does not appear to significantly diminish the City’s future prospects for commercial office uses along the adjacent frontages.

This senior living concept appears to have local market appeal and may well be an agreeable fit for our community, given the parameters negotiated in the aforementioned annexation agreement. Before taking action, the Commission’s view of the proposed variation regarding the School impact fees is requested. A favorable Plan Commission recommendation is recommended.

## **II. Workshop Items**

### **A. Consideration of a Concept Plan for a Commercial Subdivision Known as the Prairie Professional Park South of Bethany Road and East of the Monsanto Headquarters.**

Dr. Dennis Collins has purchased a 9.32-acre parcel on the south side of Bethany Road, just east of the Monsanto Business Campus. He proposes to develop the parcel for commercial office purposes, as designated on the City's Comprehensive Plan, and has submitted a concept plan for the Commission's review. The attached plan depicts 10 commercially-zoned lots served by a common road that aligns with Aberdeen Court on the north side of Bethany Road. The Commission will notice that the subdivision includes one of the outbuildings that have served the Monsanto campus over the years.

The developer has worked very cooperatively with the City staff to devise a concept plan that promises an upscale commercial enclave. Upon completion, the development will feature a new dental clinic for Dr. Collins as well as a variety of complimentary commercial uses dedicated to medical and other professional office uses.

The Commission should note that this parcel falls under the conditions of the Sycamore-DeKalb boundary agreement of 1995. According to the terms of this agreement, the property would be annexed by Sycamore, but Sycamore and DeKalb would equally share all tax revenues until the expiration of the agreement in 2015, unless the agreement is extended. Considering the proposed uses, both cities would be sharing property tax and little if any sales tax.

The City staff are enthusiastic about this proposal and foresee that the plan will be a welcome addition to the Bethany Road corridor. Plan Commission direction is requested.

### **B. Consideration of a Concept Plan for a Commercial Subdivision Proposed by the Three Sula Investment Company for Property South of Bethany Road and East of the Proposed Prairie Professional Park.**

Immediately east of the proposed Prairie Professional Park is a 52-acre site that the Three Sula Investment Company proposes to develop for commercial office purposes. On the attached concept plan, the Commission will note that for presentation purposes the Collins parcel is shown to the west of the proposed development area.

The concept plan depicts 24 commercially-zoned lots that would be dedicated for commercial office uses. Two curb cuts on Bethany Road are proposed and these access points align with driveways on the north side of the street. A future road extension to the east would link this development area with the Anderson property that abuts Peace Road. The east-west road would not terminate at Peace Road, but would turn southward on the Anderson property to connect ultimately with Gateway Drive.

The Three Sula group has likewise worked cooperatively with the City staff to provide a plan that is compatible with surrounding parcels and the Comprehensive Plan. This plan

area also falls within the provisions of the Sycamore-DeKalb boundary agreement. Plan Commission direction is requested.

**C. Consideration of Chapter Four in the Proposed Unified Development Ordinance, As Well as Section 6.2.1, D, 2, ‘Fences and Walls.’**

Before turning to a discussion of the proposed Article 4 of the Unified Development Ordinance, the City Manager requests the Plan Commission’s direction on the attached revision to the City’s fence regulations. If the Commission so directs, this revision (or an amended version) could be brought back to the Commission at the June meeting for a formal hearing on its merits.

The proposed fence regulation was drafted by Zoning Commissioner Lyle Doty who has the most local experience with the City’s fence regulations, their application, and their shortcomings. As the Commission will see in the attached graphic, Mr. Doty has proposed a compromise that allows progressively higher fences as one moves back from the property line. Specifically, he proposes the following:

- a) Fences that are 75% or more open may be installed to a height of three feet (3’) at the property line in a front or corner side yard (secondary front yard).
- b) Fences that are 75% or more open may be installed to a height of five feet (5’) if more than ten feet from a property line or street right-of-way.
- c) Fences that are 50% or more open may be installed to a height of six feet (6’) in the side yard or corner side yard setback area if they are behind the required setback line.

Plan Commission direction is requested.

**Chapter 4. Proposed Unified Development Ordinance**

The draft of Chapter 4 defines development review procedures for site plans, which are the purview of the Plan Commission and Council, as well as the conditions and procedures for variations, which are the purview of the Zoning Board of Appeals. Additionally, the Chapter lays out the process for amending the UDO, including its zoning district regulations and the zoning map. Please be prepared to discuss these provisions on Monday the 10<sup>th</sup>. Your comments and suggestions are very welcome.