

TO: The Sycamore Plan Commission

FROM: Bill Nicklas
City Manager

DATE: July 6, 2005

RE: July 11, 2005 Plan Commission Meeting

The Plan Commission has no action items and five workshop items on its agenda.

I Workshop Items

A. Consideration of a Concept Plan for the Commercial Development of the Artery Farm.

The First Rockford Group of Rockford, Illinois will present a concept plan for the development of the 75.84-acre Artery Farm at the northwest corner of DeKalb Avenue and Peace Road. The firm proposes to develop the farm as suggested in the 2003 Comp Plan, namely with the entire Peace Road frontage to a depth of 1,200 feet dedicated to highway commercial uses and a corridor at the west fringe dedicated to multiple family condos or townhouses as a transitional buffer.

The attached concept plan features the following:

- 410,000 square feet of commercial retail space in a power strip with five “big box” footprints;
- Up to 92,000 square feet of outlot uses. The ultimate configuration of outlots is likely to change; the developer wanted to depict the maximum buildout in light of City parking and landscaping requirements.
- 47 condo lots.

First Rockford has been working on a number of challenges presented by the site, including storm water management and the transportation issues attending a large commercial center, including access from Peace Road, which is a secondary or minor arterial approaching primary arterial status in terms of average daily trips. James Hankins, PLS and Jeremy Carter, P.E. of McClure Engineering Associates cooperated in a traffic impact study which is the basis for the access plan depicted on the attached

concept drawing. Excerpts from the study are appended. The Sycamore-DeKalb County agreement on access to Peace Road presently allows one access drive to the 80-acre site at Sarah Drive. This access was also intended to serve the Simon property to the north. The traffic study concludes that such limited access would create serious congestion and traffic safety issues at the one full intersection, given reasonable expectations for traffic to and from a commercial center of the scope proposed by First Rockford, not to mention future traffic to and from commercial uses on the Simon property. The plan before the Commission depicts two full signalized intersections with one right-in, right-out access point in between. Sarah Drive is shifted somewhat south but would also remain a key access point to the Simon property to the north. The Simon annexation agreement recently reviewed by the Commission assured access to the extended Sarah Drive and the recapture of proportionate costs for the construction of the extension.

Aside from the Sarah Drive access point, additional access points are presently not permitted in the joint Sycamore-DeKalb County agreement on Peace Road. Negotiations between City and County officials on this point are in progress. The commercial development of the Artery Farm is a key goal of the City's Comp Plan, as depicted on the 2003 Land Use Map, and is a component of the County's 2003 land use plan.

Internal access to and from the rear residential uses needs further review and discussion, given the extraordinary length of the proposed cul-de-sac (the City's limit is 500 feet). Possibly, the extension of the center aisle westward, narrowing to a fire lane width, would address this issue. A lot would need to be removed to permit access to the cul-de-sac, and the future street extension to the west could be moved slightly northward to align with such an access point. Appropriate restrictions on access to emergency vehicles would limit the mixing of personal vehicles and delivery trucks in the area between the large "big box" and the proposed supermarket footprint.

Favorable Plan Commission direction is recommended.

B. Consideration of a Concept Plan for the Commercial Development of the Southwest Corner of Peace Road, IL Rt. 23 and Plank Road.

At the southwest corner of the intersection of Peace Road, IL Rt. 23, and Plank Road there is a 20.55-acre site that is zoned "C-3" Highway Commercial District. This parcel is part of the Heron Creek planned unit development that was annexed in February of 1999. The parcel was sold by the original developer, B&B Development LP, to Location Finders International in 2004 and is currently of interest to Jewel-Osco, a subsidiary of Albertsons of Boise, Idaho.

Jewel-Osco representatives will be present at the July 11 meeting to explain their interest in Sycamore and this particular site. A detailed conceptual plan is attached and will be the focus of the Jewel presentation.

The Commission will observe that the concept plan depicts seven (7) individual parcels. Parcel 7 comprises a 1.147 landscaped berm between the commercial site and the single-family housing in the Country Estates phase of the Heron Creek subdivision. Jewel is interested in Parcels 1 and 2. Parcel 1 contains 8.472 acres and principally comprises the Jewel-Osco store footprint. Parcel 2 contains 1.354 acres and comprises the “Jewel Express” fuel station and car wash. Parcels 3, 4, 5 and 6 comprise outlots that would be retained by the developer, Location Finders, for other retail investments.

There are a number of salient points about the attached concept plan that the Commission may wish to consider:

- a) Land Use. The proposed land use conforms with the zoning and land uses approved in the Heron Creek annexation of February 1999 and both the 2000 and 2003 Comprehensive Plans.
- b) Access to IL Rt. 23. Access to the site from IL Rt. 23 is controlled by IDOT standards that define access to and from state roads. The B&B development plan of 1999 showed one approved access point at the southeast corner of Parcel 1, which is shown on the attached concept plan. The “right-in, right-out” which the Jewel plan shows on the IL Rt. 23 corridor was not anticipated when IDOT considered and approved the B&B engineering plans. The engineering consulting firm working with Jewel on this project, Cowhey Gudmundson Leder, Ltd., has approached the District 2 IDOT office in Dixon with the plan and a traffic study from Gewalt Hamilton Associates and is awaiting a written response. The City has not supported this access point because of its proximity to the intersection with Plank Road and its proximity to the southeast exit.
- c) Access to Peace Road. Access from Peace Road is currently controlled by the City of Sycamore/DeKalb County agreement of May 1999. In that agreement, the full intersection at the northwest corner of the property is authorized. The proposed right-in, right-out on the Jewel plan was not included. As in the case of the Artery Farm, no commercial development was under consideration at the time of the approval of the joint agreement on access so additional access points were not pressed by the City or considered by the County Board.

The proposed right-in, right out along Peace Road has been considered in two traffic studies performed by Bill Grieve of Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc. (see the attached February 28 and April 18, 2005 studies). The texts of these studies are appended. Both studies recommended a permanent raised median to prevent motorists from making unauthorized and dangerous left turns onto Peace Road from the right-in, right-out access point. The Commission can see a close facsimile of what the right-in, right-out would look like by driving by the Walgreen store along its Peace Road frontage. The County-built and engineered median is very

similar to what is proposed by Jewel's traffic analyst, as is the lane configuration at IL Rt. 23. The April 18, 2005 analysis specifically addressed the possibility of cars using the right-out and weaving erratically to cross several lanes of traffic before the intersection. The study concluded that vehicles exiting the Jewel site would merge into a single lane and would have adequate space before the intersection to shift to the left turn lane. It should be noted that the merging and stacking distance between the centerline of the proposed Jewel right-in, right-out and the centerline of the intersection with Rt. 23 is about 700 feet. The merging and stacking distance between the centerline of the Walgreen right-in, right-out and the centerline of the intersection with DeKalb is about 581 feet.

- d) Detention. The detention capacity is provided in the ponds located off-site in the adjacent, residentially-zoned land area.
- e) Configuration of Buildings. Except for the Jewel-Osco space and the Jewel fuel station, the other retail spaces noted on the concept plan are speculative and can be adjusted to meet retail client needs. The Commission may want to consider whether it would prefer to see the fuel pumps closest to the intersection or the brick service station. In terms of functionality and traffic flow, the orientation shown on the plan is more efficient.
- f) Landscaping/Screening. The new UDO's landscaping requirements for both the screening of the adjacent residential units and the landscaping of the wide parking areas would apply.

The Plan Commission is well aware that the City has been marketing this site and the other commercially-zoned sites at the intersection of Peace, Plank and Rt. 23 since the Heron Creek annexation in the late 1990s. The combination of steady residential growth in the surrounding area, growing per capita incomes and overall market demand, and continuing favorable commercial interest rates have made this site most attractive for the uses that are briefly summarized herein. Favorable Plan Commission direction is recommended.

C. Consideration of a Concept Plan for the Residential Development of the Whitwell Farm.

On June 14, 2004 home builders Greg Derrico and John Cebrzynski presented a concept plan for the phased residential development of the Jack T. and Margaret M. Whitwell farm to the Plan Commission. Because this consideration came on the heels of the Council's rejection of the Plan Commission recommendation (by a vote of 9-1) in behalf of George Haviar's proposed residential planned development on the Fenstermaker parcel on Bethany Road, the Commission was reluctant to consider the Derrico/Cebrzynski plan without further guidance from the Council. As the Commission will recall, a joint meeting between the Council and the Plan

Commission soon followed on July 12, 2004 which led to a community-wide dialogue on growth management into August, at which time the 2003 Comp Plan was re-affirmed and the pacing regulations incorporated in Ordinance 2003,65 were likewise re-affirmed. However, the Council made it clear at the August 2, 2004 meeting that a community fiscal impact study was needed to test prevailing assumptions about the fiscal impact of commercial, residential and industrial development on the City, the School District, the Park District and the Sycamore Library. This study was completed in March and presented to the Council on March 21, 2005. Since that time a series of meetings of representatives from local taxing bodies, economic development agencies, and private development interests have produced a consensus around a package of public policy initiatives to address issues raised in the fiscal study. Mr. Derrico and Mr. Cebrzynski attended most of these meetings and are now hopeful that their conceptual development plan can be reviewed by the Commission with the expectation of a recommendation.

A conceptual site plan is attached. It is the intent of Messrs. Derrico and Cebrzynski to test the Sycamore market for their high-end housing by developing 80 acres of the Whitwell farm between 2007 and 2011. If the market supports their product, they intend to develop the balance of the Whitwell farm after the obligatory five-year delay outlined in Ordinance 2003.65 (attached). The projected flow of permits for this approach is depicted in the revised permit timeline that is attached, which also includes the permits projected for the B&B proposals that the Commission reviewed in June.

Plan Commission direction is recommended.

D. Consideration of a Concept Plan for the Residential Development of the Walters and Cambier Farms.

At the March 8, 2004 meeting of the Plan Commission, David Fagenal, a principal of R.A. Fagenal Builders, 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 95.6 acres. Mr. Fagenal proposes to build 180 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. As in March of 2004, the developer's concept does not make a distinction in terms of lot sizing in these two development areas. Other issues presented by the revised plan include the following:

- a) Access. The revised concept plan attached to this agenda shows the principal and only entry off Brickville Road. The plan does not show an extension of Motel Road as portrayed in the City and County Comp Plans.
- b) Park and School dedications (or cash in lieu of same). To be determined by these taxing bodies. A large (16.5-acre) park site is shown on the plan and the developer and Park District will presumably discuss this land in terms of a possible dedication.

- c) Timing of First Permits. The most important question considered by the Commission in March of 2004, in terms of growth management, was when the first permits would be issued. Ordinance 2003.65 would allow the first permits two years after the annexation was approved. That would have put the first permits in 2006, when over 550 residential units of all types were expected (see attached timeline). The developer proposed a delay until 2009. The Commission concurred. Is the Commission still comfortable with this judgment?

A year has passed since the last workshop on these parcels. Mr. Fagenal followed the City's growth debate in 2004 by attending most subsequent meetings as well as a number of Council meetings, and chose not to take further steps until the results of the fiscal study were known, and further public debate about the policy implications of that study ensued. Mr. Fagenal now wishes to formulate more detailed engineering and development plans, but wanted to bring his concept back for another look before proceeding. A permit timeline is attached showing the impact of the proposed addition of lots from the Walters and Cambier farms, according to Ordinance 2003.65. The timeline also shows the related impact of the B&B proposals and the potential Whitwell farm development.

Plan Commission direction is recommended.

E. Consideration of a Concept Plan Submitted by Larry Patton for the Rezoning of Land in the Turner Addition From "R-2" Two Family Residence to "R-3" Multiple Family Residence.

As the attached letter indicates, Mr. Patton would like to re-subdivide and re-zone two adjacent duplex lots in the Turner Addition to build a four-unit building on the combined lot. The lots have frontage on Commercial Street, but it is Mr. Patton's intent to orient the proposed four-unit building to face Becker Place, although access would remain on Commercial Street. Several graphics are attached to orient the Commission to the location of the lots in relation to the Reston Ponds development and the Turner Addition.

Plan Commission direction is requested.