
SYCAMORE PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES OF AUGUST 14, 2006

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairperson John Lewis called the meeting to order and City Clerk Candy Smith called the roll. Those Commissioners present were: George Bridgewater, Tom Brotcke, Bill Davey, Lowell Evans, Ken George, Cindy Henderson, Bill Lorence, Cheryl Maness, Michelle Schulz, Dave Shipley, Larry Steczo and Chairperson John Lewis. Other staff members present were City Manager Bill Nicklas, City Engineer John Brady, Building Commissioner/Zoning Officer Lyle Doty, and Commission Attorney Kevin Buick.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 10, 2006.

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to approve the Minutes of July 10, 2006 and Commissioner Schulz seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 12 - 0.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion

Commissioner George moved to approve the agenda and Commissioner Brotcke seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 12 - 0.

CONSIDERATIONS

A. Consideration of a Petition from Camden Crossing LLC for a Special Use Permit for the Purpose of Permitting the Re-Subdivision of Twenty-Four Duplex Lots for the Sale of Attached Single Family Dwellings on Separate Lots with a Common Wall Agreement.

City Manager Nicklas explained that since this development was approved the City has established the position of plat officer to administratively process minor re-subdivisions to permit the sales of duplex and townhouse units with common lots in fee simple. He said the approval of this Special Use Permit authorizes the sales of the attached duplex units in fee simple.

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to forward the Special Use Permit to Council with a favorable recommendation to Council and Commissioner Davey seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Commissioners George Bridgewater, Tom Brotcke, Bill Davey, Lowell Evans, Ken George, Cindy Henderson, Bill Lorence, Cheryl Maness, Michelle Schulz, Dave Shipley, Larry Steczo and Chairperson John Lewis voted aye. Motion carried 12 - 0.

B. Consideration of a Petition from Camden Crossing for Approval of a Final Plat for the Gardens of Camden Crossing P.U.D.

City Manager Nicklas explained that when Council approved the final plat for Camden Crossing November 2004 it did not depict the townhouse area that was simply shown as lots 68 and 69. He said this plat shows the townhouse area in detail.

Ron Stonebreaker, 9N807 Koshare Trail, Elgin, IL, said he owns the entire 41 acres through Camden Crossing LLC and this plat is identical to the preliminary site plan for the multifamily approved in November 2004. He said he has not made any changes, they are just desiring to proceed with what Council approved at the preliminary level.

Motion

Commissioner Davey moved to forward the final plat with a favorable recommendation to Council and Commissioner Bridgewater seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Commissioners George Bridgewater, Tom Brotcke, Bill Davey, Lowell Evans, Ken George, Cindy Henderson, Bill Lorence, Cheryl Maness, Michelle Schulz, Dave Shipley, Larry Steczo and Chairperson John Lewis voted aye. Motion carried 12 - 0.

C. Consideration of a Petition from Naheed Siddiqui for the Annexation of Property at 2212 Coltonville Road and Rezoning to "R-3," Multiple Family Residence for a Six-Unit Apartment Building.

City Manager Nicklas said that Mr. Siddiqui owns a single-family home on a .636-acre parcel at 2212 Coltonville Road which is presently within the County's planning jurisdiction and is in close proximity to a number of multiple family structures. He said the petition is to annex this property with an R-3 zoning to allow for the construction of a 6-unit apartment building or as many units as the City's zoning codes will allow.

Chuck Cronauer, attorney for the petitioner, said this is a desirable project for the community because right now it is a dilapidated single-family home. He said the plan fits in with the Comprehensive Plan and they will work out the storm sewer issues.

Mr. Nicklas said the matter before the Commissioner is the annexation and rezoning and it is not necessary that the petitioner present a full-blown floor plan elevation as long as they are not requesting any variations.

Commissioner Brotcke asked when they would be able to build.

Mr. Nicklas said they would be subject to Ordinance 2005.60 which defers any building permits until 2010.

Commissioner Brotcke asked what would happen to the property in the mean time because it is in very poor condition and is being vandalized.

Mr. Cronauer said if this is approved, it is their intention to file a variance from that ordinance to demolish and rebuild.

Chairperson Lewis asked if there was sufficient room for a 6-unit building with setbacks and parking.

City Engineer Brady said there is adequate space, but the retention and storm sewer need to be reviewed.

Chairperson Lewis asked if the variance from Ordinance 2005.60 request would go through the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mr. Nicklas said it would be a variance from Council ordinance so it would go through City Council.

Commissioner Henderson asked if there were any issues from the single-family neighbor.

Mr. Nicklas said no communication had been received.

Mr. Nicklas said if Plan Commission wanted to weigh in on the variance City Council might consider that useful.

Commissioner Steczo said he thought the variance part was City Council's job.

Motion

Commissioner Steczo moved to forward the annexation and rezoning with a favorable recommendation to Council and Commissioner Lorence seconded the motion.

Commissioner Brotcke asked what would happen if the Council would not approve the variance.

Mr. Nicklas said the property would be a property maintenance issue to be addressed by the City.

Commissioner George asked if a single lot would be considered a P.U.D. or a subdivision.

Mr. Nicklas said it could not be a P.U.D., but could be considered a subdivision.

City Engineer Brady said it was already in a subdivision as lot 1.

Chairperson Lewis said the question is whether Ordinance 2005.60 would govern this property.

Mr. Nicklas said he would consult with the attorney.

Commissioner Maness said that when they were discussing Ordinance 2005.60 they did not want to hold up single lots to wait until 2010 so they could improve lots like this.

Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Commissioners George Bridgewater, Tom Brotcke, Bill Davey, Lowell Evans, Ken George, Cindy Henderson, Bill Lorence, Cheryl Maness, Michelle Schulz, Dave Shipley, Larry Steczo and Chairperson John Lewis voted aye. Motion carried 12 - 0.

D. Consideration of a Petition from Todd Weaver to Rezone the Property at 132 Sabin Street from "C-2," Central Business District to "R-3," Multiple Family Residence District.

City Manager Nicklas said this area is not considered part of the central business district and the R-3 would be more compatible with the surrounding uses of the property. He said the proposed building must comply

with the yard setback and parking requirements. He said the conceptual plan is a work in process because it does not comply with all of our regulations and if they proceed with the rezoning, those regulations must be met before any building permits are issued.

Chairperson Lewis said the Commissioners could either act upon the current information or table action for a future meeting until more information is available.

Mark Doherty, attorney for the petitioner, said this property is primed for cleaning up with one building down and the other to come down once ComEd gives their ok. He said Mr. Weaver and the City Engineer and City Building Commissioner are working together toward a building that will comply with City regulations. He said Mr. Weaver is proposing a 4-unit building with one-bedroom apartments and the goal tonight is to get the rezoning approved. He said that Mr. Weaver has been handling properties like this for 15 years and is hoping this will be a nice addition to the tax base as well as an aesthetic value of the neighborhood.

Bernice Kayes, 140 Sabin Street, asked if there would be only one building.

Mr. Nicklas said the maximum would be one 4-unit building because the new zoning code has higher standards for parking spaces and landscaping. He said no variance from the parking requirements has been requested.

Richard Tom, 133 Vista Terrace, said he lived next door to the property and asked the Plan Commissioners not to consider the request to change the zoning until they have a better idea of what exactly the plan is. He provided pictures of that area of town and the deterioration and erosion of Swanson Street and they were concerned about the added traffic and street parking. He asked, on behalf of himself, his neighbors, and his wife, that they table the request until they could review the UDO and perhaps consult with attorneys.

Chairperson Lewis said given that the typical information they use to take action is not present, they can take action on the information they have or hold this over until the September meeting.

Commissioner Brotcke asked the zoning of the property directly south.

Building Commissioner/Zoning Officer Lyle Doty said it was R-2.

Commissioner George asked how many families have been living in the unit.

Mr. Weaver said there have been 4 families.

Mr. Nicklas said they could hold this over and address some of the issues raised. He said he was not familiar with how that property looked for many years and in the next few days there will be an immense change for the better which may be some relief. He pointed out that the City may have been derelict from a property maintenance standpoint and in not enforcing parking. He said he does not know what Mr. Weaver will propose for a final elevation, but whatever it is must meet today's codes. He said the main issue is a zoning question and if C-2 zoning remains it would allow automats, bakeries, ice cream stores, meat markets, outdoor cafes, restaurants, farmer's markets, which would really add to the traffic. He said the Plan Commissioners should seriously consider the zoning question and the parking and street repair are separable issues that would fall under other governmental offices within the City.

Commissioner George asked how the lot size compared to the one next door.

Mr. Doty said the lot would support four 1-bedroom apartments.

Commissioner George expressed concern that the apartments had dens and questioned how that would be enforced not to be used as a 2-bedroom.

Commissioner Davey said he was confused with the objections of the neighbors because it looked like Mr. Weaver was going to fix what they were complaining about. He said the street is not their problem and it looks like they are going to clean up the property.

Diane Tom, 133 Vista Terrace, said she understands that Mr. Weaver has owned the property for 8 years and it has been in disrepair all that time. She said they would like some guarantee that he will take an interest in the neighborhood more than just rental income.

Mr. Doherty said they feel this is an improvement to the property and the past is not the issue. He said his client is trying to clean up the property and any issues relative to the plan itself will be addressed. He said Mr. Weaver is willing and eager to comply with all of the regulations of the City. He also mentioned that off-street parking will be in the plan.

Motion

Commissioner Brotcke moved to forward the rezoning of the property at 132 Sabin Street with a favorable recommendation to Council and Commissioner Steczo seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Commissioners George Bridgewater, Tom Brotcke, Bill Davey, Lowell Evans, Ken George, Bill Lorence, Cheryl Maness, Larry Steczo and Chairperson John Lewis voted aye. Commissioners Cindy Henderson, Michelle Schulz, and Dave Shipley voted nay. Motion carried 9 - 3.

WORKSHOP ITEMS

A. Consideration of a Concept Plan for a Mixed Commercial and Residential Planned Unit Development on the Herst Farm.

City Manager Nicklas explained that the Herst Farm was zoned and annexed September 2005 and was not prompted by development interest, but by the City's interest in securing the dedication of a right-of-way to re-align Lindgren Road where it connect with Plank Road. He said the features of that plan were the re-alignment of Lindgren Road, a neighborhood commercial area, a transitional area of 11 or so acres of townhouses, and beyond those 71 acres for single-family low density housing. He said this concept plan will be presented by John Hall Homes and is unique with some planning features we have not seen around here.

John Hall, Jr., said he and his father have been building homes for over 30 years in the St. Charles area. He said they do small developments and custom homes and partner with Paul Hessler of Acorn Properties in Batavia. He said John Hall, Sr., attorney John Reagan, and planner Dave Waden of Land Vision were in attendance.

Dave Waden said the site plan is currently zoned C-1, R-1, and R-3. He said the 97-acre site is surrounded by B & B's developments. He said the plan depicts 152 single-family lots, 29 zero lot line units, 30 townhouse units, and 48 condominium units with 11 acres of open space. He said they propose to integrate different lot sizes to create a more diverse plan. He said they were trying to minimize garages on corner lots and side loaded garages. He explained that the zero lot line single-family units create intimate courtyards behind the homes and will have an alley behind the lots that will hide the garages. He said the adjacent house has a solid wall with no windows and is completely enclosed from neighbors. He said this is a good transition from the slightly larger single-family lots to the slightly smaller single-family lots to the mixed use. He said they think it is a better look than a complete row of townhomes because they are not connected. He said the townhomes face Lindgren Road with the backs facing the lake and the garages are in back. Mr. Waden said the mixed use will need to be changed to C-4 to allow condominiums on the 2nd and 3rd floors. He said they are proposing the commercial area as an intimate neighborhood area. He said they would need 20-foot side yards for the side-loaded garages on the corner lots. They would like to add 3 acres of commercial, taking away from the multi-family, to create a mixed use urban streetscape.

Commissioner George asked about the traffic lights, deceleration lanes, and bike paths.

Commissioner Lorence said there are no signal requirements at Lindgren, but that might need to be reevaluated with the commercial property.

Commissioner Lorence asked if zero lot lines were allowed in the UDO.

Mr. Nicklas said not of the type suggested here, but this is an opportunity for some privacy as opposed to connecting walls. He said they would also have to deal with lot size that does not comply with our UDO. He suggested if they wanted to move forward with this, Plan Commission could simultaneously change the UDO.

Commissioner Lorence said the concept of garages in the back was popular at the round table discussions with the public during the Comprehensive Plan review process.

Commissioner George asked if the alleys had curb and gutter and who would maintain them.

Mr. Waden suggested in most cases there are homeowner's associations and they are proposing a right-of-way/easement that could be curb and gutter; those details will have to be worked out.

Commissioner Henderson asked if the trash pickup would be behind the homes.

Mr. Waden said the services would be in the back.

Commissioner Lorence said that garbage trucks are hard on streets and asked if the City has standards for alley pavement.

City Engineer John Brady said probably not that stringent, but because this is a P.U.D. they could request the alley standards.

Commissioner Bridgewater asked about fire safety with the zero lot line units.

Mr. Nicklas said the building code has specific guidelines and as mentioned there are no windows in the adjacent walls and as in townhouses there are fire separation assemblies between units.

Mr. Hill said they use noncombustible materials for outside walls.

Commissioner Shipley asked about the access to the townhomes.

Mr. Hill said they would be on the same alley.

Commissioner Shipley said it looked like that would create a lot of traffic in the alley.

Commissioner Steczo said there is no dedicated park space, but he would like to see a dedicated bike path to articulate with surrounding subdivisions.

Mr. Nicklas said there is a sub-regional bikepath planned on the south side of Lindgren Road. He said the concept plan does not show sidewalks or bikepaths, but connecting it to that sub-regional bikepath would be a good way to connect it to surrounding subdivisions. He said Park District Director Dave Peek suggested that a bikepath along the east side of Plank Road would not be good placement.

Commissioner Lorence said bikepaths should be kept away from major arterials and kept to local collectors.

Commissioner Schulz expressed concern about the businesses and this subdivision becoming their own island with no connection to the heart of town or interaction with the rest of the community.

Mr. Hill said they are concerned about the architecture of the out buildings and trying to depart from the strip malls to create an amenity to give people in the area a nice place to go. He said with 2500 to 3000 new homes the community will need more than the downtown area.

Mr. Nicklas said that during the downtown review process the consensus was that the downtown core is what gives Sycamore our identity. He said if they stick with C-1 zoning the number of uses is limited; he said they could refine the edges.

Commissioner Schulz said she worries that those residents would not be drawn to downtown to become part of the community.

Mr. Hill said there will be a need for pockets of commercial businesses to sustain all the people.

Chairperson Lewis asked the Commissioners to comment on the 3 variances that are requested.

→ Minimum Sideyard Setbacks

Townhouses (“R-3”)		
	UDO Requirement	Proposed
Front Yard	25’	25’
Corner Side Yard	25’	25’
Side Yard	7’	7’
Rear Yard	30’*	30’

Zero Lot Line Houses (“R-3”)		
	UDO Requirement	Proposed
Front Yard	25’	25
Corner Side Yard	25’	10’
Side Yard	7’	7’
Rear Yard	30’*	25’
Single Family Detached (“R-1”)		
Front Yard	25’	25’
Corner Side Yard	25’	20’
Side Yard	10’	7’
Rear Yard	25’	25’

Commissioner Shipley asked why the variance was needed for single-family detached houses.

Mr. Hill said it was needed to de-emphasize the garages because otherwise the size of the home would be restricted.

Commissioner Lorence asked if the 7-foot sideyard variance was for corner lots only.

Mr. Hill said for all the single-family detached.

Mr. Nicklas added that before the UDO was in place in 2005 seven foot was the standard.

Mike Liszka, 470 Lincolnshire, said if we allow these changes then we will have to allow all the builders to change. He said the area will look like Chicago, except those have sidewalks between them. He said this is not what we want in Sycamore.

Commissioner Evans said he does not understand why the homes could not be designed a little smaller to have the lots conform to standards.

Mr. Hill said that would destroy the front elevation of the homes and they would not be sellable.

Chairperson Lewis said it looks like there is some concern about the sideyard variance.

→ Minimum Lot Size for Zero Lot Line Units

Commissioner Shipley said he had an issue about the size of the alley between the zero lot line units and the townhomes.

Commissioner Lorence expressed concern about adequate parking for the townhomes when their only access is through the alley. He said he was also concerned about fire code and the reason we have a UDO is to create the town we want. He said he is not opposed to the idea of zero lots lines because it is a unique way to transition from commercial to residential and this might be the place to try this.

Chairperson Lewis said one of the nice things about Sycamore is the diversity and this would provide an opportunity to add to that. He said the concern about the potential impact on downtown is something they need to look at.

Mr. Nicklas said the planning debate has been going on in Sycamore for the past 10 years and he said at the staff level they thought this worked as a transition alternative. He said he thought the Commissioners needed to give the developer more specific direction.

→ Bikepaths

The consensus of the Commissioners was that they wanted bikepaths to tie into other bikepaths.

Chairperson Lewis asked if the Commissioners were willing to give more specific direction now.

Commissioner Lorence asked if the zero lot lines could be accomplished through a P.U.D. so the UDO would not need to be changed.

Mr. Nicklas said he thought there should be some language in the UDO.

The consensus of the Commissioners was to make that change to the UDO.

Mr. Nicklas said he thought more input was needed regarding the yard setbacks.

Commissioner Brotcke asked how many of the 259 lots would be affected by the variance.

Mr. Waden said all 152 single-family lots and all of the zero lot line lots.

Commissioner Brotcke said if they dropped 1 lot they could eliminate the problem; otherwise he said he liked the concept.

Commissioner Schulz asked why the sideyard standard was changed

Mr. Nicklas explained that there was a concern about big houses on little lots.

Chairperson Lewis asked if going from 10 feet to 7 feet was a major problem.

Commissioner Evans said it was a major problem because there was a reason it was changed and it would not be fair to the developers that must abide by the 10 foot sideyard.

Chairperson Lewis said as long as it does not interfere with safety and draining, giving up 3 feet to get garages out of site is not a big problem. He said it sounded like the Commissioners were not clear, but had issues with the variance for sideyards.

Mr. Hill asked if they were concerned with the setbacks.

Chairperson Lewis said he was hearing that the concern was with the sideyards.

REPORTS

PERSONS TO BE HEARD FROM THE FLOOR ON OTHER THAN AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. and Commissioner Schulz seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 12 - 0.

Approve:

Chairperson – John Lewis

Attest:

Candy Smith, City Clerk