

TO: The Sycamore Plan Commission

FROM: Bill Nicklas
City Manager

DATE: January 3, 2007

RE: January 8, 2007 Plan Commission Meeting

The Plan Commission agenda has two workshop items.

I Workshop Items

A. Consideration of a Preliminary Plat for the “Tradition of Sycamore” Planned Unit Development (Herst Farm).

On August 14, 2006 the Plan Commission held a workshop regarding the future development of the Freda Herst farm. In that workshop session, John Hall Homes of St. Charles, Illinois presented its conception of a mixed commercial and residential development for the property. The attached preliminary plan has been submitted for a second workshop review by the Plan Commission by the developer to make sure it is consistent with prior direction, in advance of a formal submittal at the February Plan Commission meeting.

Background

The 97.21-acre Freda R. Herst farm was annexed and zoned on September 19, 2005. The farm is located at the northeast corner of Plank Road and Lindgren Road. In the fall of 2005, Freda Herst was not interested in developing her property, but in the context of discussions with City officials concerning the dedication of a realigned Lindgren Road, the impact of such a public improvement on future development of her property naturally arose. Ms. Herst and her counsel, Robert Krupp, petitioned to annex their property to the City of Sycamore and to provide for the realignment of Lindgren Road, with certain conditions spelled out in an annexation agreement. The salient terms of the agreement are as follows:

- The agreement had a term of 20 years;
- The annexation provided for the creation of neighborhood commercial zoning (“C-1”) district along the realigned Lindgren Road (please see the attached Zoning Exhibit), as well as a transitional townhouse area (zoned “R-3”) that

separated the commercial area from a larger single family zoning (“R-1) area to the north and east.

- The agreement made it clear that the realignment of Lindgren Road and a portion of National Street that courses through the Herst property would be completed by B&B Development, at their sole expense. If and when a final plat was approved for any portion of the Herst farm, fifty percent (50%) of the cost of the new Lindgren roadway and that portion of National Street on the Subject Property would be recaptured by B&B Development.
- When warrants exist, traffic signals at the intersection of Plank Road and the realigned Lindgren Road would be installed by B&B Development. If and when a final plat for the Herst farm property was approved, the future developer would be responsible for reimbursing B&B Development for twenty-five percent (25%) of the cost of said signals.
- If and when the residentially-zoned areas of the property developed, the City would be reimbursed at the rate of \$50 per residential unit for upsizing costs associated with the sewer main serving the Herst property and additional properties nearby.
- If and when the Subject Property was developed, the installers of the 18-inch sanitary sewer main serving the property (B&B Development) would recapture a portion of their upfront cost based on the ratio that the estimated additional population bears to the total anticipated population served by the trunk line.
- Whenever any residential development occurs on the Herst property, the impact fees then in effect would apply, as they may be amended from time to time.
- Most important, any future development would be reviewed under the City’s planned unit development regulations, as a special use, with all required public hearings pertaining to preliminary plats, final plats, rezonings, etc. This provision prompted the workshop session in August.

The Proposed Preliminary Plan from John Hall Homes

The attached preliminary plan and plat present the following key features:

- a) The realignment of Lindgren Road (see review comments below).
- b) Land Uses. To better represent the Comp Plan’s expectations for a mix of commercial and low-intensity commercial uses near the intersection of Lindgren Road and Plank Road, the “C-4” Mixed Use Commercial Business District is suggested. This is a change from the August concept plan to conform to the UDO’s stricter guidelines for mixed use developments under the C-4 provisions. All of the proposed “C-1” and “R-3” zoning would be combined in the planned development format as a special use, “C-4” Mixed Use Commercial Business District. Such a zoning designation anticipates planned unit developments designed to accommodate compatible residential and commercial uses on larger tracts of land and to maximize opportunities for orderly economic development. Typical mixed use designs include a core

of community facilities (e.g. not-for-profit agency offices, day care centers, etc.) small retail establishments (e.g. corner market, dry cleaner) and commercial office uses (e.g. dentists, attorneys, etc.) adjacent to, or surrounded by, a variety of housing types including single family detached homes or townhouses or zero lot line single family houses as depicted on the concept plan. In such zoning districts, public or open space to promote public gathering is encouraged, in contrast with utilitarian open space such as stormwater detention ponds or undevelopable areas such as floodplains or wetlands.

- c) Commercial and residential condominiums. Two-story buildings will house commercial units on the ground floor with the option of residential or commercial condominiums on the second floor, depending upon market interest. The mixed commercial/residential buildings would have low profiles to blend with the nearby residential buildings.
- d) Court yard homes. These units are part of the C-4 zoning area and are adjacent to the commercial uses. As an alternative to townhouse construction, courtyard or “zero lot line” homes are built on smaller lots and feature a courtyard on one side of each unit. This approach departs from the repetition in design and the close living quarters that typify even the most expensive townhouses in our community.
- e) The 4.5-acre townhouse area is left unplatted to await market interest. A future revision of the preliminary plan and plat would be required if and when there is sufficient market demand to warrant such housing, as depicted in the original concept plan of August 2006.
- f) Park space. Park District director David Peek sees the two dedicated parks in Sycamore Creek II, immediately east of the Herst farm, as adequate to the needs of residents in this area. One of the B&B parks, the three-acre Columbia Park, would be directly east of the Herst farm on Des Moines Street. A larger regional park in Sycamore Creek II—the 13.86 acre Washington Park—is just to the north and east of the smaller park. Sycamore Creek II can begin development in 2010. A photocopy of the adjacent portion of the Sycamore Creek development plan is attached to illustrate the proximity of the parks.
- g) Bike Paths. The Commission and City staff have been insistent upon bike path linkages since the 2000 Comp Plan process. In this instance, the regional pathway that is to be built on the south side of Lindgren Road needs to be linked at Schumaker Way (the main Lindgren Road entrance) to bring a dedicated pathway to the single-family zoning area.

Variations

1. Minimum Yard Setbacks. The neo-traditional look proposed by John Hall Homes introduces a number of features such as alleys and “old-town” frontage

looks that conflict with the City’s conventional zoning setback requirements. The differences between the current code provisions and the developer’s proposals are highlighted in the following tables:

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’

*20 feet if garage is attached to rear of unit for alley access. Detached garages may be 3 feet from any side or rear lot line.

2. Minimum Residential Lot Size. The zero lot line houses would be unique in Sycamore. They are an alternative to rows of attached housing that have a repetitive look. Zero lot line houses align one building wall on a common lot line and set the opposite building wall off the adjacent lot line by at least the required seven feet in order to create a small courtyard between units. The walls built on the lot lines would have to be designed without windows for fire protection purposes. A depiction of these quaint houses is attached. If this approach is acceptable, a variance from the minimum lot size of 9,000 square feet would be required.

3. Second Floor Residential Condominiums. To permit the introduction of second floor condominiums in a “C-4” zoning district, a variation from the provisions of Table 5.3.1 of the UDO would have to be granted to allow such uses by right. Presently, second floor residential uses above ground floor commercial uses are only allowed in the “C-2” Central Business District.

Phasing and Zoning

In terms of the pace of any residential permits, the applicable regulatory framework is Ordinance 2003.65 (Ordinance 2005.60 was not approved until November of 2005). According to Ordinance 2003.65, building permits for residential construction may be issued annually as follows:

Number of Dwelling Units on the Preliminary Plan	Dwelling Units Permitted Per Year as a Percentage of the Total Lots on The Preliminary Plan	Time Limit Before New Building Permits Are Issued Following Annexation
0 to 50 dwelling units	No Limit	No Time Limit
51 to 100 dwelling units	No More than 35 per Year	One Year
101 to 200 dwelling units	25% or 40, whichever is lower	Two Years
201 to 300 dwelling units	20% or 50, whichever is lower	Three Years
301 to 400 dwelling units	18% or 60, whichever is lower	Four Years
401 to 500 dwelling units	15% or 70, whichever is lower	Five Years
Over 500 dwelling units	10% or 75, whichever is lower	Six Years

Ordinance 2003.65 permits the phasing or sequential development of tracts which have less than 100 acres in total area. In this instance, the developer hopes to develop commercial uses simultaneously with the various types of residential units, but the market for the commercial uses may not evolve at the same pace as the demand for the residential units. Accordingly, the developer proposes two phases. The C-4 zoning area constitutes one phase, and the R-1 zoning constitutes another phase. The permitting of the first single family home in the R-1 zoning could occur two years after the date of Council approval.

Review Comments

The City staff have shared the following review comments with the developer since receiving the attached preliminary plan and plat:

- The C-4 property should not have access to Lindgren Road except at the National Street intersection, and possibly a right-in only roughly between Plank Road and National Street, on both sides. Whether or not either right-in option would work is a matter that should involve the County Engineer, with respect to stacking issues and other safety considerations near the intersection with Plank Road.
- The portion of Lindgren Road which will be vacated once the realigned Lindgren Road is constructed can be shown as being incorporated into Lots 305, 306 and 307 with the same C-4 zoning since the approved annexation agreement provided that all of this vacated road would go to the Herst property.
- The alley at the rear of the courtyard homes should be a private alley.
- If National Street north of Lindgren Road is to be a private street, then the name should be changed to something other than National Street.
- The green buffer area along Plank Road should be shown as also adjoining the C-4 Lots 300-305.
- The location of the proposed bikepath should be shown.
- Ten feet (10') of additional right-of-way should be shown along the north side of Lindgren Road adjoining Lot 300 for construction of a right turn lane. Also, an additional ten feet (10') of right-of-way should be shown at the radius at Plank Road.
- Setback lines for the C-4 lots should be shown on the plat.
- The note for the typical lot standard for the single family homes should be revised so that the side corner setback can be reduced to 20 feet, provided there is no driveway directly to the street on this side of the house. This requirement is

necessary in order to prevent the rear of the vehicles from being immediately adjacent to or over the public sidewalk when not pulled up close to the overhead garage door.

- The typical street cross section shown is for a Minor Residential Street and should be labeled as such. A note should be included that the street standards for residential collector streets and commercial streets shall conform to the requirements contained in the City's Unified Development Ordinance.
- Some proposed street names will need to be changed since they either duplicate existing street names or sound similar to existing city streets: Lee Street, Brady Street and Bowers Street. Also, Shumaker Way should be changed to Presidential Parkway.
- The volume of the storm water storage areas should be checked since the total volume being provided seems to be low. Since the project is larger than 40 acres, the storm water storage shall be designed using an approved hydrograph method rather than the rational method.
- "Tradition of Sycamore" should presumably be plural, i.e. "Traditions".

Recommendation

The City staff request a favorable recommendation for the attached plan and plat, including the proposed variations, subject to the changes outlined above.

B. Consideration of a Concept Plan for the Thanks America Subdivision.

The area that is currently known as the "Thanks America" subdivision was originally annexed by others in November 1976 (Ordinance No. 76.45) to create contiguity with what was to become the Kmart or Gateway Center subdivision. The entire area was once owned by DeKalb Ag Research, Inc.

Years after the Kmart annexation, about 120 acres to the east of the Gateway Center subdivision, extending on a north-south axis from Gateway Drive to Oakland Drive, were purchased by Milan Krpan. In the late 1990s, Mr. Krpan submitted a number of smaller plats for approval without a comprehensive preliminary plan. These development initiatives occurred at the periphery of existing subdivisions and were designed to blend with them. For instance, in July 1998, the final plat for the "Thanks America" Commercial Subdivision, Phase I, was approved by the Sycamore City Council (Ordinance No. 98.34). This plat created seven (7) lots with "C-3" Highway Business zoning along Oakland Drive, east of the Kmart store. On the same date, the Council approved the final plat for the Thanks America Professional Subdivision (Ordinance No. 98.36) This plat created four lots (Lots 1,2, 3 &4) that were also zoned "C-3" at the intersection of Dosen Drive and Gateway Drive, immediately east of the Hauser Ross Professional Campus subdivision (see attached).

In June 1999, Lots 4-7 of the Thanks America Commercial Subdivision, Phase I, were re-zoned to "M-1" Light Manufacturing in response to inquiries from small industrial and contracting firms looking for lots of about 1-2 acres (Ordinance No. 99.17).

With the opening of the Oakland Drive Extension to Peace Road via Dosen Drive and Wirsing Parkway, there is renewed commercial and industrial interest in the largely unplatted acres that remain in the Thanks America subdivision. A more comprehensive plan for this subarea's development would be justified by this fact alone. Several other factors contribute to the need for a more orderly plan, namely

- the development interest to the north, represented by the Three Sula commercial subdivision (52 acres and 24 lots annexed in August 2004);
- the recent purchase of the 25-acre Thorald Anderson parcel at the southwest corner of Peace and Bethany Roads by Mr. Krpan;
- the continuing commercial office development in the Prairie Professional Park by Dr. Dennis Collins.

Mr. Krpan has been encouraged to create an overall concept plan for his holdings, which stretch from the east side of the former Kmart site to Peace Road, and extend roughly between the Oakland Drive corridor and Bethany Road. The attached concept plan, prepared by Hanna Surveyors, is presented by Mr. Krpan in consideration of the City's mutual interest in an orderly and successful development of the commercial and industrial sites he controls.

The concept plan poses a number of considerations that merit the Commission's attention:

- **Commercial Zoning.** A copy of the concept plan is marked to reflect the present zoning. The proposed lots, excluding Lots 1-4 of the Thanks America Professional Subdivision and Lots 1-3 of the Thanks America Commercial Subdivision, are presently zoned "M-1" Light Manufacturing District. The businesses developing in the Kishwaukee Health Services subdivision are primarily commercial office uses and it is logical that this type of use would continue eastward on Gateway Drive, on both sides, based on the proximity of the new hospital. A rezoning of the lots along the Gateway Drive corridor to "C-3" would be appropriate in this light.
- **Industrial Zoning.** The City's need for industrial-zoned lots of varying sizes is addressed by retaining the "M-1" zoning of Lots 8-24. The larger unsubdivided area gives the developer and the City flexibility in attracting one or more larger industrial users to this industrial park.
- **Unincorporated Land.** Based on the Sycamore-DeKalb boundary agreement of 1995, the land east of the Com Ed right-of-way and the former Thorald Anderson property will be split among the communities upon annexation, but the entire un-annexed area falls under the revenue-sharing provisions of that agreement. The former Anderson property would be annexed to Sycamore, and the parcel to the south (the former Swiatek parcel) would be annexed to DeKalb, once development interest is identified. Under these political conditions, it appears that the 13.2 acre parcel abutting Peace Road that straddles the future Sycamore-DeKalb boundary may need to be re-drawn.
- The proposed roadway that runs along the west side of the Anderson property and the east side of the Voluntary Action Center would pass through a significantly sloped terrain and would require careful engineering, but would

align with a logical entrance to the Ideal property behind the houses on Bethany Road, if re-development of the northwest corner of Peace and Bethany Roads were to occur.

Plan Commission direction is requested. With the Commission's direction, the developer intends to prepare a preliminary plan and plat for formal review at an upcoming meeting.