

TO: The Sycamore Plan Commission

FROM: Bill Nicklas
City Manager

DATE: August 8, 2007

RE: August 13, 2007 Plan Commission Meeting

The Plan Commission agenda has one workshop item.

I Workshop Items

A. Consideration of an Administration Recommendation to Consider a Comprehensive Plan Update.

The present Comprehensive Plan was approved by the City Council on June 2, 2003 (Ordinance 2003.13). In the four years since the Plan was last updated, the Commission has recommended a number of new residential, commercial, and industrial annexations in line with the Plan's land use map and objectives. The Commission has also recommended a number of Plan modifications and new regulatory measures to better implement the Plan's objectives. The key Commission actions are as follows:

1. November 2003. The Commission recommended an amendment to the City's zoning code to impose a new regulatory framework on the pace of residential construction. This framework tightened the limitation on the number of permits that could be issued per year from each development (a limitation originally imposed in February 2003) and imposed a time lag following annexation before any new building permits could be issued. This regulation was approved by the Council on November 17, 2003 (Ordinance No. 2003.65). The linking of a limitation on the number of annual permits with a constraint on the timing of the first permits was a first in Illinois.
2. April 2005. The Commission recommended the Council's adoption of a new Unified Development Ordinance ("UDO"), which was adopted by the Council on April 18, 2005. The initial in-depth consideration of this compilation of all City zoning, development, and subdivision ordinances began in April 2004 and continued over six additional Commission meetings in 2004 and 2005. The UDO replaced the City's zoning code.

3. December 2005. The Commission recommended the revision of the UDO provisions regarding the pacing of new housing permits to conform to Ordinance No. 2005.60, approved by the City Council in November 2005. The proposed revisions were as follows:
 - the elimination of the “bank” of permits that Ordinance 2003.65 allowed the developer to carry over from one development year to the next.
 - the establishment of a threshold of January 1, 2010 for the first permits for any future subdivision approvals.
 - a commitment to review any future annexation agreements with the expectation that the timing and number of permits would conform to the fiscal standard of an average of 250 dwelling units per year.
 - a reduction in the allowable number of permits that can be issued per year, at each threshold in the regulatory schedule.
 - the removal of some confusion pertaining to the subdivision of larger tracts.
4. March 2006. The Commission recommended a new Airport Road Sub-Area Plan to provide more definition to the community’s vision for the development of approximately 675 acres extending north, south, east, and west of the intersection of Airport Road and East State Street. The plan was approved by the City Council on April 3, 2006.
5. March 2007. The Commission voted to amend its by-laws to conform to UDO provisions, recent legislative enactments, and case law (the by-laws were last revised in October 1997).

The Commission has also recommended some minor departures from the Plan’s land use map in the past four years. The amendments are as follows:

- a) May 2004. The Commission recommended and the Council approved (June 7, 2004) the 17-acre Gracious Living Homes project south of Bethany Road and west of Somonauk Street. The 2003 Land Use Map anticipated commercial uses along the Bethany Road frontage, but did not contemplate the attached housing south of this commercial frontage. The Commission and Council ultimately approved a mixed-use development that offered both a commercial frontage consistent with the land use plan and an adjacent townhouse layout to the south that might be served by the eventual commercial uses.
- b) September 2005. The Commission recommended and the Council approved (September 19, 2005) a commercial parcel on the Herst Farm where Lindgren Road and Plank Road will be re-aligned. The land use map shows a small commercial node on the Kocher farm across the street, but that portion of the farm has not been annexed and the North Grove Crossing plan would not accommodate commercial traffic as well as the re-configured intersection on the east side of Plank Road.

In the course of its deliberations since the 2003 Comp Plan was approved, the Plan Commission has sought guidance from the City Council on two occasions: in September 2003 and in July 2004. On both occasions, the Commission and Council sought to find

common ground regarding further residential development. The special meeting in July 2004 inspired the Council's commitment to an independent study of the fiscal impact of residential, commercial, and industrial development on the Sycamore community. The resulting study, completed in March 2005, in turn prompted Mayor Mundy to organize an ad hoc Committee on Growth Management in May 2005 that sponsored a number of fiscal measures (including the transfer tax) to address development impacts on local taxing bodies. The recent independent fiscal study performed by Dr. Emanuelson and presented to the Mayor's ad hoc committee provided an update to the 2005 study, particularly with respect to the methodology for determining projected population impacts on local taxing bodies.

How Do We Grow From Here?

As the foregoing review may suggest, the Plan Commission has been a dutiful steward of the City's Comp Plan and has sought refinements to the Comp Plan that would assist the Council in managing local economic development. When one compares the 2003 Land Use Map and the 2007 Zoning Map (see attached), one can see that the community has been following its plan for future development. Does this plan still represent the community's vision? After four years, this is a fair question to ask.

If the Commission believes it is time to review the Comp Plan and Land Use Map, what process should the Commission follow? As the Commission is aware, the Comp Plan is more than a compilation of maps and broad goals. The Plan also details specific community objectives in the areas of land use, community appearance, downtown enhancement, economic development, transportation, etc. So, the process will ultimately require the translation of graphic images and opinions into useful statements of purpose and reachable objectives for about a five-year period.

Where do we begin? One of the attachments is titled "Draft Future Land Use Map--2007." This map was prepared by the City staff to stir discussion rather than pre-figure the outcome of that discussion. It has the following features:

- **The "rural residential" designation that was on the 2003 Land Use Map has been deleted.** This area consists of residential subdivisions that were approved years ago within the contiguous County jurisdiction north of Peace Road and west of Brickville Road. In the 2003 Plan, this area was added to the Future Land Use Map for the first time to reflect the theoretical possibility that owners of some of these low-density, estate-sized homes might want to annex to the City to have access to municipal water and sewer. In the past four years, no residents of this area have petitioned for annexation. In the current market, it is not expected that the prospect of city property taxes along with utility services at 1-1/2 times the resident cost will be a magnet for homeowners in this area.
- **The "yellow" or neighborhood residential areas in the unincorporated portion of the 2003 Land Use Map have been substantially reduced in area, particularly on the northeast side.** Approximately 3,000 acres of "neighborhood residential" were shown on the 2003 Future Land Use map, of which about 2500 were in the northeast quadrant served by the 27-inch interceptor sewer installed by B&B Development as part of their obligation under the Heron Creek

annexation agreement in 1999. Of the 2500 acres in the northeast quadrant, sewer line capacity remained for about 1900 acres that were not part of preliminary plans between 1999 and 2003 (e.g. the Heron Creek, Sycamore Creek, DeKalb Clinic and Ward properties). When the interceptor sewer was sized, it was assumed that such acreage would primarily be developed for low-density residential uses with a gross density of less than 2 units per acre, on average. Actual densities have averaged around 1.75 units per acre, so some modest additional capacity has become available. Nevertheless, because of the prohibitive cost of extending another interceptor sewer to land areas north of Peace Road, the capacity limitations of the 27-inch sewer line have required a first-come, first-served approach to the allocation of sewer service in the northeast quadrant.

Although larger market forces and the appeal of the Sycamore community were more important in explaining the strong interest in residential development from the third quarter of 2002 until the second quarter of 2006, the capacity limitations played a part as well. From June 2003 until the present, the following annexations occurred north and east of the intersection of Peace, Plank & IL Route 23:

✓ North Grove Crossing	96.28 acres
✓ Sycamore Creek II	365.54 acres
✓ Sycamore Creek III	
Mapes	114.09 acres
Lindgren	41.09 acres
Wolfenberger	282.98 acres
✓ Whitwell Farm	261 acres
✓ Primm Farm	99 acres
✓ Herst Farm	97.21 acres
Total: 1,357.19 acres	

A number of unincorporated properties could still be served by the 27-inch interceptor sewer. These areas include the Inland property (201.64 acres), the Clausen farm on Lindgren Road (40 acres), the Walters and Cambier Farms near the intersection of Brickville and Peace Roads (90 acres), small parcels on either side of the future extension of Frantum Road to North Grove Road (a total of 84 acres), and the Roby Farm and other small parcels near the intersection of North Grove Road and IL Rt. 23 (150 acres). The total of these un-annexed areas is approximately 565 acres. **About 600 acres set aside for low-density residential development on the 2003 Future Land Use Map north of North Grove Road and west of IL Rt. 23 will not be served because of the limitations of sewer line capacity in the northeast quadrant and have been dropped from the future development area in the “Draft 2007” attachment.**

- **The land areas east of the intersection of Mt. Hunger Road and Hopkins Lane are not slated for annexation or development.**

- **The commercial, office/research, and light industrial designations that have not been annexed since 2003 are shown essentially as they were designated on the 2003 map.**

The City Manager proposes discussion in workshop fashion by the Plan Commission regarding the “Draft 2007” map to give some guidance to the City staff before scheduling public open houses for the Comp Plan update.