
SYCAMORE PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES OF JANUARY 14, 2008

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: Marvin Barnes, Ron Bemis, George Bridgewater, Lowell Evans, Ken George, Bill Lorence, Michelle Schulz, and Chuck Stowe. Commissioners Bill Davey, Cindy Henderson, and Steve Nelson were absent. 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 DECEMBER 10, 2007.

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to approve the Minutes of December 10, 2007 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 9 - 0.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion

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

Voice Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 9 - 0.

Commissioner Bill Davey arrived at 7:01 p.m.

CONSIDERATIONS

A. Consideration of a Petition from Jack and Darla Mapes to Annex a 6.25-Acre Farmstead at the Southwest Corner of the Intersection at Plank Road and Springfield Street.

City Manager Nicklas explained that what is proposed is to annex this 6.25-acre parcel and to merge it with a 3-acre parcel to the north which is shown as retention in the Sycamore Creek preliminary plan. He said it would make the site a little more flexible for laying out future structures, in this case proposed townhomes, and is the only way to get access out to Plank through Springfield Street. He said the detention would be redesigned. He said this parcel is surrounded on three sides by Corporate Limits. He said the R-3 zoning is a viable use for this area and staff supports this petition. Mr. Nicklas said there is not a development plan so this would need to come back before Plan Commission before development begins.

Alan Brauer, Land Vision, 116 W. Main St., St. Charles, IL, explained that this site is east of Sycamore Creek Commons and to the north is Sycamore Creek II. He said the total site is roughly 9.17 acres and just the Mapes piece is 5.89 acres. He said the north piece that was previously shown as detention would be moved to the south creating a natural buffer to the south.

Mr. Nicklas said, procedurally, if Council does not approve this, then any rezoning of the retention to the north would be mute. He said if passed, then that would need to be rezoned.

Commissioner Davey asked where the 6.25 acres comes in.

Mr. Brauer said the 5.89 acres is the Mapes farmstead.

Mr. Nicklas said he went with the survey that said 6.25 acres.

Commissioner Barnes asked if Sycamore Creek Commons and Sycamore Creek II had already been rezoned.

Mr. Nicklas said all the property around the Mapes farmstead has been incorporated.

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to forward the Annexation of the Mapes parcel with the findings of fact with a favorable recommendation to Council and Commissioner George seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Commissioners Marvin Barnes, Ron Bemis, George Bridgewater, Bill Davey, Lowell Evans, Ken George, Bill Lorence, Michelle Schulz, Chuck Stowe, and Chairperson Lewis voted aye. Motion carried 10 - 0.

B. Consideration of an Administration Recommendation to Revise Section 6.8.4 of the Unified Development Ordinance.

City Manager Nicklas said this item came about because of off-premises signs such as real estate signs that regularly appear at intersections and on properties remote from development they are advertising and also signage appearing on trailers or vehicles that are parked on prominent properties to advertise goods and services offered at other locations. He said with this revision the Sycamore police officers will be able to write ordinance violations to offenders.

Commissioner Henderson arrived at 7:14 p.m.

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to forward the revision with a favorable recommendation to Council and Commissioner Schulz seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Commissioners Marvin Barnes, Ron Bemis, George Bridgewater, Bill Davey, Lowell Evans, Ken George, Cindy Henderson, Bill Lorence, Michelle Schulz, Chuck Stowe, and Chairperson Lewis voted aye. Motion carried 11 - 0.

C. Consideration of a Final Plat for the Engh Farmstead.

City Manager Nicklas explained that at the last Council meeting Council consensus was behind dedicating the use of part of the Engh Farmstead to the Park District, who would act as the lead agency to work with the Sycamore Historical Society Museum and the YMCA. He said the City has interest in retaining a portion of the property for a new water storage tower with possibly a well at its base in the future. He said this plat will allow for the transfer of ownership of the greater portion of the parcel to the Park District.

Motion

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

Roll Call Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a roll call vote to approve the motion. Commissioners Marvin Barnes, Ron Bemis, George Bridgewater, Bill Davey, Lowell Evans, Ken George, Cindy Henderson, Bill Lorence, Michelle Schulz, Chuck Stowe, and Chairperson Lewis voted aye. Motion carried 11 - 0.

WORKSHOP ITEMS

A. Critique of the Proposed Future Land Use Map.

City Manager Nicklas said he was looking for a little clearer direction on the possible uses within our mile-and-a-half planning area. He said that 75% of the proposed map is shown as agricultural uses. He pointed out that the future residential development of the City is circumscribed both by policy and by practical reality that there will not be sewer capacity barring any extraordinary and unforeseeable private investment to extend any future trunk sewers to the northeast side. He said the proposed map shows 242 commercial acres, 392 office research acres, and 466 industrial acres to be developed. Mr. Nicklas emphasized that the large rural residential in County subdivisions shown on the 2003 map have been removed from the 2007 draft. He said Steve Glasgow was in the audience and has an interest in a portion of that area.

Steve Glasgow, 3085 Wolf Ct., DeKalb, distributed a concept plan of a portion of the Fowler Farm that he and his wife recently purchased. He said they are interested in developing a very low-density development around the flow of water with 95% open space, 8 home sites, and paddocks for horses. He said it would be self contained and sustained through wind turbines and solar energy. He said they purchased this with the idea of the 2003 land use map and when he heard the land use map was going to change, he felt he should introduce this concept to the City.

Chairperson Lewis asked if Dr. Glasgow wanted his development to stay in the County.

Dr. Glasgow said he would do whatever it took to make it work.

Chairperson Lewis asked if it was his preference to have City water and sewer.

Dr. Glasgow said at some time in the future, yes.

Mr. Nicklas said it might be possible to get City water out there, but it would probably not be possible to get City sewer. He said if the property is not contiguous, the County frowns on this type of development so the best chance may be through contiguity.

Dr. Glasgow said he thought being contiguous was possible. He said they want this to remain as natural as possible without curb and gutter and with narrow roads.

Chairperson Lewis said this is shown as Ag use in the 2007 draft.

Mr. Nicklas said the Plan Commission could leave that parcel as light yellow rural residential on the land use map.

Chairperson Lewis suggested thinking about this for a month and talking about it at the February meeting.

Mr. Nicklas asked about the rest of the land uses on the 2007 draft land use map.

Chairperson Lewis said if the rural residential is removed there is not much left to play with and hearing no comments, continued to the next item.

B. Critique of the Goals and Objectives in the 2003 Comprehensive Plan.

City Manager Nicklas highlighted some of the desired revisions one section at a time.

Community Appearance

- Work more deliberately on gateway designs
- Implement a graphic depicting the City's plan to link bike paths

Residential Development

- Retain the permitted density in multifamily or high density zoning district to nine units per gross acre
- Retain regulatory framework for the pacing of new housing starts
- Promote affordability

Mr. Nicklas said he referenced affordability in new subdivisions by encouraging quality construction of smaller houses on smaller lots. He said the City went away from that in the last four years and the middle ground is the townhouse. He said he was not proposing going back to the minimum of 7500 sq. ft., but as we look at new development plans we might keep in mind that there are creative ways to cluster homes.

Chairperson Lewis asked if this would allow for a developer to come back with a refined development plan with smaller lots.

Mr. Nicklas said we did that with John Hall Homes with the courtyard homes. He said in existing neighborhoods code enforcement is the way to maintain property values.

Commissioner Davey said we fought for bigger lots because we did not want small houses on small lots. He said that affordable housing is used housing.

Mr. Nicklas said he could excise that section if the Commissioners did not like it. He said when rebuilding on existing lots an eye must be kept on the theme established in the surrounding properties.

Commissioner Stowe said they should give consideration to smaller houses on smaller lots because people keep suggesting they like Sycamore's charm and that cannot happen with large houses on large lots.

Commercial

Mr. Nicklas said there was not much change.

Industrial

Mr. Nicklas said that the general themes established in the 2003 plan are still relevant today.

Downtown Enhancement

Mr. Nicklas said keeping the downtown viable is a daily concern for City government, but he hoped not to the exclusion of other outlying established retail space. He said the City is holding to the beautification of the downtown and has just about finished a 6-year campaign to gentrify and to establish streetscape looks on our downtown main thoroughfare and side streets. He said we still have South Main Street and the section of East State Street that runs in front of the Library and Post Office to do next year. He said there are a couple of areas ripe for redevelopment that the City will want to remain alert to the possibility of reassembly of some parcels.

Economic Development

Mr. Nicklas said the key to a good development plan policy is to cooperate with other public and private agencies and to have a seamless flow of information.

Community Facilities

Mr. Nicklas said this involves our parks and libraries and having viable sources of revenue is one of the themes he addressed. He said he identified the City well and storage tank in this section, because we did have a reference to Fire Protection rating which is related at least at arms length to accessibility to water.

Natural Features

Mr. Nicklas said that we have updated the landscaping ordinance and changed the wording to enforce it.

Transportation

Mr. Nicklas said the City is committed now to an aggressive street maintenance plan. He said the Blue Line bus service has been established and its use will be tracked over the next year.

Commissioner Lorence said that the Blue Line ridership is at 50 per day as compared to the DeKalb Green Line at 200 per day.

Mr. Nicklas asked that recommendations for the revisions be made for the February Plan Commission meeting.

REPORTS

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

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Commissioner Lorence moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. and Commissioner Bemis seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Chairperson Lewis called for a voice vote to approve the motion. All Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried 11 - 0.

Approve:

Chairperson – John Lewis

Attest:

Candy Smith, City Clerk