

PLAN COMMISSION

JANUARY 15, 1997

Members Present: Dan Robison, Carl Cepon, Lyle Foster, Bill Smith, Steve Kaplan and Chairman Rudny

Members Absent: Bill Gill

Other Officials Present: Jon Wildenberg, Director of Building & Zoning; Tracy Velkover, Village Planner; Bud Reed, Village Engineer; E.M. "Al" Maiden, Rolf C. Campbell and Associates; and Barbara Swanson, Village Attorney

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 P.M. by Chairman Rudny.
2. Mr. Kaplan moved, seconded by Mr. Cepon to approve the minutes of the December 18, 1996 meeting as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Cepon, Kaplan & Rudny

Nays: None

Abstain: Robison & Smith

Motion Carried 3-0-2

3. Public Hearing: Petition of Auto Nation and Cypress Equities for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Preliminary Plat, with underlying C/B-2, Community Business District, zoning on 63 acres of property at the northeast corner of Rt. 132 and the I-94 Toll Road.

Mrs. Tracy Velkover presented an overview of the property, its zoning history, and the zoning action requested. The subject property, in combination with land now developed as the Westgate Subdivision, was annexed to the Village and zoned as a planned unit development (PUD) in 1977. Townhome and single-family residential uses were designated north of the Commonwealth Edison high tension lines. Office/research use was slated immediately south of the Commonwealth Edison lines to occupy roughly half of the non-residential use area; while B-2, Business Use, along with a specific use list, was designated for the remainder of the non-residential use area carrying south to Rt. 132.

In 1980, the Village comprehensively amended its zoning ordinance. Following this amendment, the two non-residential use designations in the PUD were modified in an effort to assign a 1980 zoning ordinance classification that most closely matched the previous zoning ordinance classifications. The office and research area became C/O-2, Office and Research District; while the B-2, business area became C/S-2, Automobile Supported Business District.

During 1988 and 1989, the Westgate Townhome and Westgate Single Family subdivisions were constructed. The non-residential portions of this PUD remain undeveloped up to this point in time. It should be pointed out that seven acres of the non-residential area, directly on the northwest corner of Rt. 132 and Dilley's Road, are under different ownership and are not part of the subject petition.

Mrs. Velkover explained that the PUD process consists of three progressive approval stages, i.e. concept plan, preliminary plat, and final plat. The subject property currently has concept plan level approval with underlying zonings of C/O-2, Office Research, to the north; and C/S-2, Automobile Supported Business District, to the south. Movement from concept plan approval to preliminary plat approval requires a public hearing process and the consideration of detailed development plans. The subject petition is requesting that the non-residential portion of the PUD go from concept plan approval with underlying C/O-2 and C/S-2 zoning, to preliminary plat approval with underlying C/B-2 zoning. One user, the Auto Nation vehicle sales facility, is currently known and is seeking approval of their development plans on 21 of the 63 acres involved. Development standards for future users of the balance of the property are also being proposed for consideration.

Chairman Rudny noted that this evening's proceeding is the first public hearing on the matter. It is also the Plan Commission's first time to look at the proposal. The Commission would anticipate continuing this matter for both the Commission and residents to further review and discuss. The Plan Commission's function as an advisory body that forwards a recommendation to the Village Board. The consideration process then continues from that point with public meetings before the Village Board. Final decision-making authority is vested with the Village Board.

Mr. David Reifman, attorney representing the petitioner, introduced members of the development team that would be presenting testimony, including: Mr. Newell Turpel, Auto Nation USA; Mr. John Straughtman, Auto Nation USA; Mr. Lane Kendig, Planning Consultant; Mr. Luay Aboona, Traffic Engineering Consultant; Mr. Pete Manhard, Civil Engineering Consultant; and Mr. Todd Lipinski, Staubach & Company.

Mr. Newell Turpel began by introducing the Auto Nation USA concept and marketing strategy. Auto Nation presents a new marketing concept for pre-driven vehicles. All cars on the lot will have been reconditioned off-site at another facility. Prices are posted on vehicles in a similar fashion to new car stickers. A one price concept means there will be no price haggling. Each vehicle comes with a warranty and money back guarantee.

Auto Nation has been organized by the same principals involved with Waste Management, Blockbuster Video, Republic Industries, Alamo Rental, and numerous new car dealerships. Currently, there are seven Auto Nation stores open and eleven under construction nationwide.

A five minute video tape was shown that pointed out additional features of an Auto Nation operation, including:

- Vehicles sold are 1-5 years old;
- Average sale price is \$14,000;
- Maximum mileage on a vehicle is 75,000 miles;
- All vehicles come with a 99 day warranty and a 7 day money back guarantee;
- Sales guides are salaried (no commissions);
- Reconditioning to prepare cars for sale is done at an off-site location;
- Typically, a 32,000 square foot showroom is constructed to house 125-150 cars indoors;
- An indoor child care area is included;
- A retail shop for accessories is included;
- The 24-bay service area performs light diagnostic work with all work being done indoors;
- Car deliveries to the site are typically done using 2-3 semi-trucks having 8-10 vehicles each, per day. No deliveries are done after 8:00 P.M.;
- A community room is available for non-profit and charitable group meetings; and
- Approximately 125 people would be employed at the site, with the median salary being \$35,000.

Project site plans were then presented for Auto Nation.

* Mr. Foster arrives at 8:05 P.M.

The design attempts to create a business park type setting with approximately 25% open space and landscaping. All perimeter areas around the site will have landscaped setback areas. A service building is proposed toward the north end of the site. This structure will have one entry door and one exit door for vehicles on the ends of the building. The height of the service building will be lower than that of the main showroom structure.

Parking lot and display lot lighting fixtures would be no higher than 25-feet. This height is also lower than the proposed showroom. A greater number of shorter light poles is proposed rather than using a fewer number of taller poles to control lighting. A pipe rail type fence feature will be installed around the display lot. The petitioner proposes to work with local authorities to develop acceptable test drive patterns for patrons.

The northern portion of the 63 acre site carries underlying office/research zoning, while the southern portion carries commercial zoning. Uses surrounding the site include: Commonwealth Edison power lines, townhome and single family to the north; commercial to the south; light office, single family, and vacant unincorporated acreage to the east; and a tollway maintenance garage, I-294, and Gurnee Mills to the west.

Mr. Kendig noted that office use on the Auto Nation site with a floor area ratio (FAR) of .50 could generate 700 vehicle trips per day. The Auto Nation use on the same site would be constructed with a .25 FAR and generate 325 vehicle trips per day.

Proposed development and architectural standards for the PUD area were discussed. A maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of .25 for the overall project is proposed. Individual sites may exceed .25; however, the cumulative total of development must be less than or equal to .25. The impervious surface ratio (ISR) for the project will be .75 with no individual site to exceed .80.

Landscaped setbacks will be provided along Dilley's Road (50-feet); I-294 (30-feet); and the north property line along Commonwealth Edison (50-feet). Berms would range from 3 to 4-feet high on Dilley's, while a 6 to 8-foot high berm is planned for the north property line. The north berm would start at least 10-feet away from the property line to help preserve the existing tree line. Plantings within these berms are to include, for every 100 lineal feet, 3 canopy trees, 3 understory trees, and 5 evergreen trees. Landscaping must also be provided within parking lot areas.

A program for signage on the Auto Nation site will be established. In addition, consistent signage standards will be applied to the balance of development to create a unified commercial project feeling.

Mr. Kendig pointed out rationale for locating the Auto Nation use to the north end of the property. In his opinion, Auto Nation can be a relatively lower intensity use versus other typical retail, service, and office uses. The Auto Nation site layout is better configured using land to the larger, i.e. north end of the property. Lastly, tollway visibility for the entire property is minimal and is concentrated to the north.

Mr. Aboona discussed some of the traffic engineering aspects of the total project. Rt. 132 carries roughly 30,000 vehicles per day as a 6-lane state highway. Dilley's Road is a 2-lane county highway. Traffic counts were performed in October for the Rt. 132/Dilley's intersection and the Dilley's/Stearns School Road intersection. A 5% increase in regional background traffic was applied. In addition, a full build-out of Northridge Plaza was factored in. Trip generations were based on the Institute for Traffic Engineers (ITE) standards manual. Needed improvements noted in the traffic report include: strong evaluation of a second left turn lane on east bound Rt. 132 to north bound Dilley's Road; construction of individual left turn and right turn lanes at both proposed project entries on Dilley's Road; addition of 2 lanes within Dilley's Road to carry through to the north end of the project; installation of a traffic signal at the southern entry point to the project, opposite Pinewood Road; and the development of a 3-lane internal circulation road within the project.

Mr. Manhard noted the major civil engineering characteristics of the development. Sanitary sewer and water are available in the area to service the proposed uses. A downstream sanitary line near Cedar Avenue may need to be enlarged. Wetland mitigation permits have been applied for with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The property generally drains east to west. A six-acre detention pond, meeting current Lake County Stormwater Management Commission standards, is slated for the northwest corner of the site. This location aids with the separation of commercial uses from existing townhome structures.

Tax impact to the various taxing bodies is expected to be very positive. The project could create as much as \$49 million in equalized assessed valuation (EAV) at build out. The Village also receives sales tax, which for the Auto Nation use alone may generate \$1.2 million per year.

Chairman Rudny expressed concern for how the proposed development pattern would comply with the Comprehensive Plan. A transition of uses was intended in the existing zoning pattern. If the use pattern is to change, then there would need to be further work done on how to offset corresponding impacts to existing residential areas. There is also concern for establishing auto sales and service as a permitted use versus a special use within the PUD. This would preclude further public hearings and may lead to proliferation of the use.

Chairman Rudny also pointed out that the amount of outdoor vehicle storage adds to the intensity of an auto sales facility. In addition, he asked if the Auto Nation site could be moved to the south end of the property.

Mr. Kaplan noted concern for the overall timing of the installation of traffic improvements, indicating that they should be operational by the time uses begin opening within the development. He also questioned the chances of actually creating dual left turn lanes on Rt. 132. Some clarification is needed on the number of visits or vehicle trips expected daily to the site. Mr. Kaplan further questioned what uses would be attracted to this type of project and if the developer has targeted any other specific potential users. The disposition of trade-in vehicles brought to Auto Nation was questioned.

Mr. Cepon asked to see the height of the Auto Nation structures in relation to the residential buildings. He also asked if the facility could be moved south. Some concern was expressed about alternatives for re-development of the site should the Auto Nation use leave.

Mr. Foster expressed concern for the overall nature of the proposed development and its relationship to the Village's Comprehensive Plan. The subject property is a regional impact site, which will convey a strong statement about the Village through its development. There is concern for permitting auto sales by right and attracting many additional auto sales uses to the site. The use list, building materials, architectural standards, signage standards, landscaping, and other development parameters need to be looked at carefully. Conflicts with existing residential uses should be minimized. In that vein, communication with neighbors is important. Safety features for the detention pond may need further study. Also, given the entry of competitors into this retail market, more information on the prospects for long-term success may be appropriate.

Mr. Kaplan asked if Auto Nation would be requesting a sales tax sharing arrangement with the Village.

Chairman Rudny indicated to the petitioner that more details are needed regarding the view from neighboring townhomes, including visual impact in summer and winter. Additional information is also needed on the disposition of trade-in vehicles, as well as the loading and unloading of vehicles onto transport vehicles.

Mr. Robison observed that the proposed six-foot high masonry wall would not completely screen delivery trucks. Alternative screening methods should be explored.

Mr. Ron Williams, 1824 Princeton Court, stated his concern for lighting, noise, and traffic on site. In addition, a traffic study based on counts in October does not reflect Great America's summer peak activity. He questioned the hours of business and whether some sort of safety barrier could be installed around the detention pond. Mr. Williams suggested more pine trees be added to the buffer for screening in winter. He also asked about the expected time frame for construction.

Mr. Barry Maxon, 1833 Princeton Court, pointed out that alternative site layouts may help to lessen impact on adjacent residential uses. Using traffic counts in October is not realistic as it does not take into account traffic back-up on the tollroad in the summer. A six-foot high screen wall will not be high enough to effectively screen delivery trucks. All screening should be looked at more carefully. He also asked if the rest of the users in the development could be positively identified at this time. He also asked why this use would want to come to Gurnee and if other sites in Gurnee had been explored for this use.

Mr. Barrett Rodriguez, 5933 Delaware, indicated that he is the president of the Westgate Townhome Owners Association. He questioned the impact this development may have on the re-sale value of homes. In addition, the proposed berming may not be adequate to screen homes from the business activity.

Mr. Roger O'Connor, 5883 Delaware, felt that the needs of the residential community to the north had not been fully addressed. He pointed out that visual site lines from the townhomes can extend all the way south to Rt. 132. He also noted concern for the adequacy of a six-foot high screen wall. He asked if truck delivery activity slated for the north end of the site could be relocated to have less impact on the townhomes.

Ms. Barbara Brandau, 980 Fuller Road, would like some information on the financial condition of the company. There is concern whether the company can withstand their aggressive expansion plans.

Ms. Debbie Kittleson, 1944 Madison, expressed concern for: crime that may be added to the area because of the use; maintaining the value of adjacent homes; and how the increased traffic will be handled.

Mr. Dave Gazinski, 5903 Delaware, expressed many traffic related concerns and suggested that all needed traffic improvements be approved prior to zoning approval. He also questioned the size, height, and location of proposed signs for the project.

Mr. Rick Dryer, 2453 Lawson, questioned the type of signs to be located along the tollroad. He noted that the east bound Grand to north bound Dilley's left turn movement can be tricky, especially for people unfamiliar with the area. More clarification is needed on the number of trips in and out of the project. A clear pattern for test drives is needed and it should not include using any residential streets. More statistics are needed on the number of expected test drives. Office/research type uses should be maintained on the north end of the development.

Mr. Don Harker, 2454 Lawson, stated that some of the Westgate drainage goes onto the subject site and asked if the detention pond would be sized appropriately to accommodate this, plus the needs of the development. He asked about Auto Nation's Sunday operations policy and if people would be allowed to walk on the lot. If so, where would they park.

Mr. Dan Whalen, 1851 Princeton Court, expressed concern for the nature of the maintenance facility, and questioned exactly what type of light service work would be performed there.

Dr. Rodney Jamieson, 5682 Delaware, stated concern for stormwater detention and run off and the conversion of farmland to pavement. He suggested a study be done to assure there would be no periodic flooding problem for residents. There was concern for the possible loss of home value.

Mr. Joe Lascola, 1854 Princeton Ct., remarked that if the PUD was approved as requested, any mom and pop car dealer could come onto the property without a public hearing. He does not favor a mega mall for car dealerships on this site.

Mr. Vince Lombardo, 5370 Sequoia, noted concern for views from the Dilley's Road frontage. He suggested looking at increasing setbacks, berming, and landscaping. A 3 to 4-foot high berm would not effectively screen parked cars. He is also concerned about what may go in on vacant property along the east side of Dilley's Road. Summertime would be more realistic for evaluating traffic impact.

Ms. Sue Simpson, 33034 Forest Drive, Grayslake, pointed out that auto sales and service is a special use under C/B-2 zoning and this is not specifically addressed in the petition. Much more clarification is needed on the amount of customers and employee traffic coming to the Auto Nation site. Specific test drive patterns need to be established which avoid Westgate and Pembroke residential areas. There is also concern for the long-term effect on property values.

Mr. Jack Asperick, 5871 Delaware, explained that the Westgate detention pond fills nearly to the top on a good rain. Auto Nation's detention area should be designed so there are no adverse impacts on the functioning of the Westgate pond. The berms at Gurnee Mills should be looked at as an example of good screening.

Mr. Tom Kramer, 1556 Yew Ct., stated that the proper handling of anticipated traffic volumes appears to be a common thread of concern.

Mr. Donald Barnhardt, 1834 Arbor Ct., stated that he was told that the wetland on the property in back of him (Commonwealth Edison property) was a registered "protected" wetland and that it was not to be altered. Is this protected wetland going to be changed by all the paving around it? He was concerned that the development will cause more run-off to drain into this wetland and damage its integrity. Also concerned that additional run-off into this wetland could encroach onto his property and wash out his berm and landscape material on the back of his lot. He does not want it to change.

Mr. Bob Wallace, 1446 Kingsbury Ct., suggested that this PUD include: no public address systems on the entire property; higher berms in the 12 to 14-foot range; and stipulations to revert the property back to its original zoning should the Auto Nation facility not be built - this could protect residents from less desirable car dealerships moving onto the site. Traffic concerns need to be addressed more specifically.

Ms. Linda Perk, 1849 Canterbury, asked for information about Auto Nation's other sites - is there adjacent residential and how does the residential feel about Auto Nation. What kind of effect has it had on their property values?

Ms. Julie Whalen, 1851 Princeton Ct., stated she would like to see a study completed to show what impacts the development would have on Westgate and Pembroke residential property values.

Mr. Chris Wilson, 1814 Newport Ct., complimented Auto Nation's site landscaping and asked about landscaping for the remainder of the PUD site.

Mr. Larry Kuharsky, 2010 Ravine Drive, questioned where the used cars come from, what type of cars are accepted, and the maximum age and mileage limits allowed. He also asked about the other six or seven potential Auto Nation sites in the Chicagoland area.

The Plan Commission discussed the testimony received and suggested that the public hearing be continued to another date for further study and review.

Mr. Kaplan moved, seconded by Mr. Cepon, to continue the public hearing to February 19, 1997, beginning at 7:30 P.M.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Robison, Cepon, Foster, Smith, Kaplan & Rudny

Nays: None

Motion Carried 6-0

The meeting was adjourned by 9:58 P.M.

Submitted by,

Jon Wildenberg, Secretary
Plan Commission