

TOWN & COUNTRY CHARETTE

July 20, 2000

6:00 to 9:00 PM

Village Board Members Present: None

Plan Commission Members Present: James Sula, Bryan Winter, and William Finn

Other Officials Present: Jon Wildenberg, Director of Building & Zoning; Bud Reed, Director of Engineering; and Kirk Skoog, Associate Planner

A planning charette was held at Village Hall to discuss plans by Town & Country Homes to develop an approximately 250 acre parcel of land (commonly referred to as the O'Connor farm) that the company owns. Present representing Town & Country Homes were Jeff Palmer, Vice President of Land Development; Peter Brennan, Attorney; Jim Frayn, Engineer from Manhard Consulting; Steve Hovany, Strategy Planning Associates; and Doug Dahlin from the Dahlin Group.

Three major roadways run north-south through the property: Interstate 94 on the west, U.S. Route 41 on the east, and Dilley's Road between 94 and 41.

The property is surrounded by the following land uses:

NORTH: One-acre single-family homes in the Village of Wadsworth

SOUTH: Steeple Pointe subdivision in the Village of Gurnee (zoned R-2 PUD)

EAST: Unincorporated, undeveloped land; some of which is part of the Lake County Forest Preserve

WEST: Three-acre plus lots in unincorporated Lake County

Mr. Palmer stated that the reason for this charette is to get the community involved as early as possible and get ideas from interested parties concerning the best use of this parcel of land. This is an opportunity to create something unique or special that the Village will be proud of. Their company went through a similar process with Vernon Hills that led to the Centennial Crossings development.

Mr. Palmer displayed aerial photos and described possible development scenarios. Mr. Frayn described the physical characteristics of the site. The property primarily drains to the east. There are a couple of large investments that will have to be made in order to develop the property. One is the extension of a sewer line along Route 41 from its existing location approximately a mile to the south along Route 21. The other major investment is required by Lake County Department of Transportation (DOT). Dilley's Road would be required to be widened from an existing two-lane roadway to a five-lane roadway from this site down to approximately Pinewood Drive, a distance of about 1.5 miles. There is an existing water connection nearby.

Mr. Hovany described the fiscal impacts of development under two different scenarios. He stated that any development would have a mostly negative effect in Gurnee. One scenario is based upon 440 single-family homes, 140 townhomes, and 516,000 square feet of office space. The second scenario is based upon 123 single-family homes, 172 townhomes, 240 apartments, and 1.1 million square feet of office space. Both scenarios would have negative fiscal impacts, however, the second scenario presented would be less negative because it would generate less children - single-family homes generate more children than townhomes and apartments.

Mr. Papp asked what the cost to the Village would be if it were developed as it is currently zoned (R-1). Mr. Frayn stated that they did not prepare a scenario that considered that possibility but in that situation the Village would end up with a lot of roadway to maintain while not collecting as much tax revenue. Mr. Papp stated that there also would be less traffic generated.

The assumptions used for impacts: Single-family homes would be 70% four bedroom and 30% three bedroom and be valued at an average of \$250,000. Townhomes would be 80% three bedroom and 20% two bedroom and be valued at an average of \$160,000. Apartments would be half two bedroom and half one bedroom and be valued at an average of \$75,000 per unit. A four bedroom home would generate 1.2 students, a three bedroom home would generate 0.8 students, and an apartment unit would generate 0.25 students. Mr. Wildenberg asked what their estimates of buildout would be. Mr. Hovany stated that the entire project would take 4 to 7 years.

Mr. Dahlin introduced and began his slide presentation. His company is located in San Ramon, California (In the San Francisco Bay Area). He presented slides of the town in which he lives, Blackhawk, California.

His company has designed a large part of this community. They primarily deal with difficult planning issues and work to create something unique with properties.

He presented different neo-traditional planning concepts which he believes develop a better sense of community and presented some examples of these developments that they have planned. He stated that Town & Country approached him about designing this type of concept for this property.

Mr. Sula asked about the zoning history of the property. Mr. Wildenberg stated that it was annexed around 1980 and zoned R-1. It is part of School District 50.

An area resident stated that the Village already has a lot of retail uses. Housing is a reasonable use for the property but high density is not practical.

Mr. Sula stated that the project would add more children to the schools. He does not see a reason to deviate from the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Palmer stated they know that they have to deal with the school districts. They were hoping to address the issue of additional children with them specifically.

Mr. Winter stated that the current zoning is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. He is open minded to different types of plans. It would be beneficial to have more people live close to where they work.

Mr. Sula stated that it is difficult to integrate a large office building with residential uses. Although the Village has a good balance of uses in the community, it has not had many corporate uses. There are a lot of low density residential uses surrounding this property.

An area resident stated that he likes the low density residential, however, he agrees that the Village should attract more corporate land uses.

Mr. Reed stated that Gurnee has approval for an access to Route 41 for this property. The Village does not want an access to Dilley's Road unless the property develops as residential. Mr. Sula stated that there should be an access to Route 41. This property should develop with housing similar to that which surrounds it. This proposal is far different. Mr. Wildenberg stated that the property was annexed and zoned R-1 in order to secure the northern border. The long term plan has proposed that this site be developed for office uses.

Mr. Finn asked if water and sewer are available in the area. Mr. Palmer stated that they are not currently available at the site. Mr. Finn stated that the development will need to be substantial in order to compensate for extending these facilities. Mr. Sula stated that the economics of the developer is not a compelling reason to change the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Winter stated that the Village's current ratio of housing is what is envisioned in the plan (60 percent detached, 40 percent attached). Apartments would skew this ratio; office uses are more appropriate.

A resident in the Mulberry subdivision to the north (in Wadsworth), stated that he prefers the area be used as office. Another resident of the same subdivision likes the country feel of the area and yet he is just 8 minutes from work. This issue is worrisome. Traffic is an issue in the area, especially in the last 3 to 5 years. Stearns School Road has become an alternative to Grand Avenue for east-west traffic. He also prefers office uses.

Mr. Finn asked what the impact on the Fire and Police Departments would be if the property is developed as residential. Mr. Wildenberg stated that the issue would have to be looked into. It would probably be okay, because impact fees are required.

Mr. Finn asked if the developer could build an office park like Amhurst Lake. Mr. Palmer stated that there are several problems involved in that type of a development:

- Topography – the area would need to be clear cut in order to grade it for office development
- Environmental – there would be a large loss of trees and a significant detention area would be required
- Market – brokers that know the market say that there is not a demand in that area for an office park

Addressing the issue of increased traffic, Mr. Dahlin asked what the typical floor area ratio would be for an office development of this size in the Village. Mr. Wildenberg stated that it would probably be around .30 or .35. Mr. Dahlin stated that this would generate an additional 7,500 peak hour trips which would be a large increase in traffic. He stated that development of this parcel will substantially increase traffic in the area no matter what is developed. Mr. Reed stated that there are some options for getting access to

Interstate 94 for east-west roadways that currently do not have an interchange. Mr. Winter asked if it is possible for Washington Street and Stearns School Road to access Interstate 94. Mr. Reed stated that these access points have been approved as possible improvements. Mr. Palmer confirmed when asked that Town & Country currently own this property.

A Wadsworth resident stated that office development is appropriate for the property west of Dilley's. Mr. Sula stated that what the Comprehensive Plan shows does not necessarily need to be built right now. It is the plan for the future. It is meant as the eventual use of the property. Ultimately for this property, traffic and schools will be the major issues no matter what is built.

Submitted by,

Kirk Skoog
Associate Planner