

APPROVED MINUTES

MINUTES
OF A WORKSHOP DISCUSSION
WITH THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AND
MEMBERS OF THE PLAN COMMISSION
ON
JUNE 9, 2003
AT THE VILLAGE HALL, COMMITTEE ROOM
IN THE VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE

On behalf of the members of the Plan Commission and on behalf of the Economic Development Commission [EDC] Strategic Planning Committee [Committee], PC Chair Jirik began the discussions at 7:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL: As this meeting was a workshop discussion, attendance was voluntary.

PRESENT: Members of the Plan Commission: Commission Chair Jirik, Commissioner Kahlke, Commissioner Matejczyk, Commissioner McCormick, Commissioner Nicholaou, Commissioner Reynolds, Commissioner Waechtler
Members of the Strategic Planning Committee: Commission Chair Riordan, Commissioner Ryan

STAFF

PRESENT: Joe Skach, Director, Planning and Community Development
Kenneth Rathje, Director, Planning Services
Steve Rockwell, Director, Economic Development
Cathy Schuster, Assistant Director, Economic Development
Amanda Brown, Planner
Lori Skotterud, Redevelopment Specialist/Planner
Ginny Mindo, Economic Development Staff

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM May 12, 2003

Commissioner Nicholaou corrected Ms. Mindo on the spelling of his name. He also noted that he wanted the minutes to reflect, regarding his comments on new developments in the community and how they could've been handled in a better manner, that he wanted to make it clear that they are still definite improvements to the community. Ms. Mindo concurred. PC Chair Jirik requested if there was concurrence on the minutes, with the proposed revisions, from the workshop on May 12, 2003. The members of both Commissions concurred.

Ogden Avenue Continued

As a wrap-up of the discussion on Ogden and as previously briefed to the assembly, Mr. Rockwell began the discussion on the Ogden Vision Statement. Mr. Rockwell added that the EDC had already started working on an Ogden Vision Statement and staff had already been looking toward marketing aspects. Staff concurred that it was now the appropriate time to present the Vision Statement to the Plan Commission to get further input before going on to the Council.

Mr. Rockwell informed the group that he and Ms. Schuster would present the Ogden Vision this evening. He added that the other members of the Ogden Committee, EDC Board members Jan Kopis and John Randall couldn't make it tonight. Mr. Rockwell mentioned that the research for this project included studying other corridors, independent interviews with many businesses on Ogden Avenue, most notably car dealerships, and also information gathered from the Urban Land Institute.

Ogden Vision Statement

Mr. Rockwell and Ms. Schuster began the slide presentation. The presentation also conveyed consensus about economic performance. Mr. Rockwell explained the title 180° Old Plank Road Vision noting that this project will entail 180° changes.

Mr. Rockwell explained the title 180°: “Why 180°? Because what we’re doing is NOT WORKING.” He cited lost tax revenue, other communities benefit from our lack of competitiveness by Village missing major opportunity to cross sell high percentage of affluent residents and non-residents, how this reflects poorly on the Village, and what Ogden could be generating if improved.

Auto dealership desires interviews were summarized including traffic/gridlock/accidents (300/year), expanding complementary businesses, clear directional signage needed, visually enhancing the corridor, working together to improve poor conditions, recognizing women and “next generation” buyers are growing customer base, and that the Internet is now a standard marketing tool.

Cathy Schuster summarized national lifestyle demographic trends including aging boomers have disposable income/inheritances, consumers live longer, active lives they lead and spend money, single/divorced/widowed consumers make purchases to establish new households [furniture, cars, etc.], people seeking new leisure/dining options, and working women delaying childbirth; less time to shop, but more money to buy “convenience” products. She explained lifestyle drives retail and that retailers must provide diverse, integrated compelling experiences for shopping, dining and entertainment or “Eater-tainment” in a pedestrian-oriented environment, retailers must redefine the shopping experience as consumers expect more than a collection of stores, which may mean increased spending for high end retail entertainment, leisure, books, health care, jewelry and apparel.

Ms. Mindo read the proposed Ogden Vision Statement: A high quality corridor providing complementary “experiential” retail, entertainment and education experiences 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This attractive, energized people-friendly corridor should be visually appealing throughout. Unifying design elements reinforce its Downers Grove location. The streetscape, building facades and signage should reflect historical Old Plank Road and “Preserving the Balance Between Tradition and Progress” message. Upgrades to technological infrastructure and multi-tract land development supports the needs of desirable retail.

Ms. Schuster and Mr. Rockwell continued by describing the seven Strategic Objectives:

1. Attract “Experiential” Retailers such as Barnes and Noble with Café, Winfred Wineries, Caribou Coffee, creative and themed restaurants, festive food courts, cinema, complementary retail, gourmet bakeries, take advantage of highly visible, high traffic location to attract impulse buyers.
2. Create vibrant 24-hour corridor by attracting businesses with extended hours, high quality entertainment options, capture sales tax revenue currently being lost to other communities.
3. Create an energized people friendly corridor with gathering places creating a sense of place.
4. Visually enhance the corridor, soften and improve look, replace asphalt and replace with landscape architecture.
5. Unifying design elements establishing connection with historical aspects of the Village.
6. Historic streetscape hearken “Old Plank Road” and “Preserves the Balance Between Tradition and Progress”.
7. Upgrade Technological Infrastructure

Mr. Rockwell noted the next section of the presentation dealt with Considerations, noting the importance of implementation and complimenting this group for all the work they have done.

1. Review land use and zoning to support new vision.
2. Support lot consolidations and assist in marketing larger sites.
3. Redefine parking requirements. Use shared parking lots.
4. Reduce curb cuts; vehicles use internal roads through connected parking lots.

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5. TIF available for assemblage of larger parcels; create tax incentives for revitalization; evaluate a split-rate tax structure that taxes the land more than the improvements to encourage development.
6. Develop relocation strategy for undesirable businesses.
7. Develop design guidelines.
8. Begin with high stakes redevelopment sites and motivated owners.

Ms. Schuster discussed What's Our Competition Doing? using Lombard's Fountain Square, Hinsdale's Gateway Square, and several locations in Bolingbrook as examples. Mr. Rockwell explained the next section of the presentation "KNOW – FEEL – DO". He explained Ogden should be a destination with a critical mass of quality retail, dining and entertainment, unique unifying elements, easy to transverse, safe, attractive, lively, energized environment, supports Village message, no need to leave the Village, and that it is a great investment. He went on to explain the "FEEL" aspects including anticipation, comfort, energy, safety, pleasure and reward. The "DO" aspect includes "shop Ogden" message, recommending Ogden, enjoying the Ogden retail experience, coming back-often, upgrading businesses, and changing "we can't" to a cultural "YES WE CAN".

Ms. Schuster reviewed the Nine Desired Outcomes of a "180° Turnabout" including a critical mass of high quality, experiential retail, dining, and entertainment options, address the "mish mash" of signage, upgraded facades and streetscape/signage, reflect "Old Plank Road" theme and "Preserving the Balance", landscape architecture, install gateway signage, green space, historic streetscape, quality retail, unifying elements, promote complementary high quality experiential businesses and pleasant environment make Ogden a "destination" and consumers shop at businesses throughout corridor, promote "24/7" corridor to match today's virtual world, recognize new signage provides clear direction, reduced curb cuts and roads through connected parking lots improve traffic flow, utilize that Ogden has state of the art wiring to accommodating experiential businesses, all in an environment that can be "people friendly".

Ms. Schuster recapped the "We Can" items for Ogden Vision including Welcoming, People friendly, Experiential retail, Charm, Historical, "Around the clock", Naturally beautified.

Mr. Rockwell then summed up what the Next Steps are including presenting Vision Statement to key stakeholders, completing Scope of Work for grant, RFQ, antique with capital improvement budget, create Attraction package, re-evaluate redevelopment sites, identify and recruit target businesses, ensure Land Use and Zoning support, present Vision Statement to Ogden businesses, install new directional signage, implement Façade Improvement Program, and develop communication network with Ogden business/property owners.

Upon completion of the presentation, Commissioner Nicholaou asked Mr. Rockwell and Ms. Schuster what they thought the first parcel to begin working should be. Mr. Rockwell noted that both the EDC and the Plan Commission should work together to come up with an implementation program. He also noted that the presentation named the high impact redevelopment areas. Commissioner Nicholaou stated that it would be helpful for the EDC to come up with a couple of target areas and bring them back to the Plan Commission. Mr. Skach stated that when these workshops first began, there was discussion about the then Redevelopment and EDC developing and coming up with ideas, and then "bouncing" them off of the Plan Commission; but it is very important that both bodies work jointly. He suggested following the Ogden Master Plan which names five sub-areas including the property owned by Aldi, which encompasses approximately ten acres of land on Ogden and Lee Street.

Mr. Skach brought up the issue of the various set back and the different zoning districts and land use regulation aspects that businesses may encounter on Ogden Avenue and the fact that it is not the same all the way along it's length. Also there was discussion in this forum that maybe the ends are different from the middle section in terms of land uses.

Commissioner Nicholaou suggested that the first areas to look at should be the area around the Luxury Motors site, and then move on to Ogden Avenue/Main Street, and then Maple/Fairview Avenue. The second major target area he noted was Belmont Street/Ogden Avenue. Mr. Skach noted that those would be Ogden Plan sub-areas E and B and maybe it should stay Commercial and Ogden Avenue should foster, underneath that

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Commercial Land Use designation, a diversity of Mixed-Use Retail to include the auto-oriented businesses and maybe only some of the higher-end uses that are allowed in B3. He added that it is important to acknowledge the newly proposed Office, Research, and Commercial land use designation which is anchoring the west end of Ogden.

Mr. Rockwell stated businesses were not going to wait for the Village to take action, they will go ahead without support; that is why it is so important to implement of the Ogden Vision, zoning, and land use quickly.

Mr. Rathje cited the example Ms. Schuster had previously discussed being D & M Corvette and all of their allowances as compared to Luxury Motors and their lack of rights because they are zoned differently; there is a need to open up some of the laws so that people can do things more easily.

Mr. Skach then suggested that the group may consider recommending amending the Ogden Avenue Master Plan to include the exhibits and the minutes from these workshops, which in turn would give additional tools to staff during conversations with developers, the important messages from these discussions are not lost and they, in fact, become part of Village policy.

Ms. Schuster pointed out to Commissioner Nicholaou that there are steps that can be taken now to start the implementation process; for instance, have design guidelines as has been discussed on several previous occasions. Mr. Skach added that certain issues would come up for consideration in the future with respect to setbacks on Ogden Avenue and how landscaping and parking lots are handled.

Mr. Rockwell noted that in the Ogden Plan, the Lakota Group identified approximately 26 sites that they thought were opportunities; they would then be prioritized depending on the market or which ones the Council wants to push forward.

Commissioner Nicholaou brought up the subject of tax revenues in relation to Luxury Motors. Mr. Skach stated that during the budget session with Council, there was a line item in the five-year development plan to update the Ogden Avenue Master Plan. He noted it is anticipated that this would not be from an urban design vision, but from an economic development finance standpoint to identify actions to take advantage of the strategic areas that are truly doable. He added that one needed step of developments would be an attraction program to target the businesses that in turn, may approach the Village with a plan. They would then petition the Plan Commission and that petition would be heard in the context of these discussions.

Commission Chair Jirik noted that Ogden Avenue is a more mature area and has been studied intensely, which helps to determine which areas to work on first, completed quickly, and that could generate returns and dividends.

Commissioner Ryan noted that there are several projects that are coming up in the next few months and asked about initial steps to move forward the Ogden Vision. Mr. Rockwell responded that it is this group's responsibility and also Council's policy to start implementing it now and if there is a negative reaction to a particular business, the Council will have to move with some speed with the staff to come up with a solution.

Commission Chair Riordan noted that the priority is finishing this group's strategic responsibilities, and the staff needs to get a plan to meet the strategic vision; Mr. Rockwell agreed. Commissioner Nicholaou suggested inviting the Council to a joint session and review what the needs are to produce tax revenue in this community. Mr. Rockwell informed the group that the Mayor and Village Manager invited the EDC to present at a Council meeting, which would occur in approximately 30 days; and it is important for members of the Plan Commission to attend and show their support. Mr. Skach stressed that it is critically important that these discussions be understood and agreed upon because it is the basis for everything that flows from it, including the Comprehensive Plan zoning code, the zoning map. He noted that this forum was a result of significant staff discussions and discussions with Council to move it forward. He reported that this forum has already facilitated positive discussions with Aldi, Jewel, and Gartner Saab and believes they have yielded a higher level of redevelopment than they would have before without these discussions and increased awareness on the part of

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Village and petitioners. Mr. Skach added that it is critically important to finalize and formalize these discussions and move toward a Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Reynolds asked Mr. Skach what was intended about zoning with respect to Ogden Avenue. Mr. Skach replied that per several discussions with the group, the recurring theme is that the zoning currently may not be as conducive to the desired direction but may be refined. Commissioner Reynolds inquired as to what should be changed. Mr. Skach said that several areas may need to be reviewed including the design guidelines, permitted uses, setbacks, and similar issues.

Commission Chair Riordan asked what the next step was and whether this group was supposed to be validating the Ogden Vision. Mr. Rockwell responded that it was important for the EDC to bring this to the Plan Commission, and if the Plan Commission has suggestions for revisions, that the discussions on Ogden Avenue can be reopened and ideas can be discussed. Another suggestion would be to just be on the record as stating that it is complementary, but that this group was not going to make the investment of time to retune what needed to be incorporated and incur to take forward in the object of time. Mr. Rockwell added that the presentation could be shown to the Council and let them know that both Commissions agree with it, and then commence with the strategic planning.

Mr. Skach added that it might be beneficial for the group to say that they had the opportunity to review the Ogden Master Plan for several weeks and that they suggest that sub areas A, B, and E should be the focus of attention. He noted that it would incorporate the Belmont Street/Ogden Avenue site, the gateway off of 355, and the gateway on the easterly end. Mr. Skach also noted that if other zones, such as C or D, come in, that they would not be ignored, but at least there would be a direction to focus on and then the Staff could start looking at the Capital Improvement Plan. This would enable the group to then have the discussion about incentives, when they are requested and when they are warranted as a part of particular petitions. Commissioner Waechtler suggested, and the assembly concurred on designating Ogden Plan zones A, B, and E as focus areas.

Mr. Skach suggested that the idea of incorporating these discussions as an amendment/addition to the Ogden Master Plan. Mr. Skach said he felt it would be a very important step, and that it goes toward making it officially a part of the policy and record. Commission Chair Jirik noted that it could be included as supplementary information, potentially as an appendix. Commission Chair Jirik stated that what should be made clear is that this is an appendix and it would reference this process, just so that the Village Council and Mayor are clear that these are two separate processes, but that they are complementary. He added that these minutes could reflect the last Plan Commission meeting because there is a lot of interest.

Mr. Skach asked the group if they wanted to refine the Ogden Avenue Goal Statement. Commissioner Reynolds remembered that the sentence "...focused on automobile sales and related services..." was supposed to be removed. Mr. Skach clarified that the Goal Statements include the original language, and where there was discussion or differing opinions, the words were bracketed and in blue for further discussion. Ms. Schuster asked if the Goal Statement could incorporate the "historic aspect." Mr. Skach stated that the words "historic goal" could be added to include the historical aspects of Ogden, which would include the Old Plank Road idea and make a distinction between historic and historical. He noted that there was the idea that as part of the intent of the Master Plan, this group would work through design guidelines or whatever mechanism to revise some of that. Commissioner Waechtler mentioned that, in deference to previous discussions, he felt there may be emphasis on Automotive and should have something more Commercial, for example, the first line read just Commercial retail, and then bracketed Automobile Commercial; Commissioner Waechtler suggested that a slash be incorporated after Retail in saying Automobile and related services. Mr. Skach clarified that the original Goal Statement said "create distinct Commercial Retail" and did not highlight the automobile component, then after the first discussion, the idea of the Automobile came in very strongly and that's how the Automobile Commercial got in there as brackets. Commissioner Waechtler added that there wasn't enough emphasis on Mixed-Use Commercial. Mr. Skach asked if the Ogden Vision Statement could be given to the Plan Commission members. Ms. Schuster said she could e-mail the presentation. Mr. Rockwell said he would copy them onto CD's. Mr. Skach said that was a good idea and it would give the Plan Commission an opportunity to review the whole presentation.

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Commissioner McCormick asked if the desire is to have a high quality distinct Commercial Retail to be complementary to “auto row”, how can there be a 24/7 component when there are limited hours, particularly no evenings or Sundays. Mr. Skach agreed and said that there have been discussions in this forum about the sensitivity to the surrounding neighborhoods. Commission Chair Jirik stated that there may need to be a different approach, and it might not quite be 24/7 in every area. Ms. Schuster said that made sense and that it doesn't have to necessarily complement every existing business.

31st and Highland

Mr. Skach began the discussion noting that this area is heavily, from a land use designation standpoint, Office Research. He added that there is a match between the land use and what the zoning says. He reported that, per previous history discussed, this came about for various reasons, some of which effected some petitions that came afterward with respect to the types of housing that the public may not have wanted to go in there. He said, in terms of this current discussion, that this is another gateway to the Village and in the context of going back to the idea of Mixed-Use along the lines of Ellsworth. Mr. Skach noted that there was some discussion about fostering different types of housing and a diversity of uses.

Commissioner Waechtler asked if the office complex east of 31st was complete. Mr. Rathje responded that it has been approved and would be best to wait for the market to put in zoning. Commissioner Waechtler stated that there isn't anything to develop there. Mr. Skach suggested that it would be beneficial to acknowledge that it is an important area, but one of the things that could be done now are some of the larger scale developments, and that meetings should be set up with the developers and get reacquainted with the Master Plan to see where it goes from here and what things can happen. He added that a proposal to do some housing where land market values may or may not have been a factor, there is certainly desire to do some additional things, and the question is what the Village's tolerance to do those is and are they maxed out or is there room for discussion similar to those regarding Ellsworth with this vibrant mix of different types of uses.

Commissioner Waechtler inquired if there was a restaurant at that location. Mr. Rathje said there are some cafeterias for the staff, but wouldn't go as far as calling them restaurants. He added that at the northeast corner under their planned development, they were approved for a hotel, health club, support uses, commercial uses, and restaurants, but they had not put in these uses. Mr. Skach added that it goes back to the need of getting reacquainted with the larger developments in the Village.

Commission Chair Jirik gave his interpretation of this area stating that when he looks south of the highway, he sees a relatively new development. When he looks north of the highway, there is an abundance of restaurants. The critical mass has been established and once it is there, it creates its own traffic, its own identity, its own gravity and inertia and there can only be so much in that particular area. He suggested to not dilute it by trying to make it happen because the market said it doesn't want it to happen here, so protect this for what it is, it's own unique type of character, it is consistent on both sides, and deem it well done and along.

Mr. Skach said that the issue of this being a planned development, which was reviewed and approved by the Village as desirable for higher intensity uses than what is currently there, should be discussed. That potential has not been fulfilled and ought to be an issue of concern for this group to find out why. Mr. Rathje said that there could only be so much carrying capacity in each building that the market can carry that the lenders would give them money for. He added that they were not going to build so much extra surplus space because the carrying cost would significantly reduce their profits. He also added that they [Developer] have sold every single one of their buildings very promptly and made an optimum profit without trying to make a maximum sized building where they will reduce their profit, because the market will only carry so much. Mr. Skach questioned if the Village, by approving the petition, has a right to certain expectation about the approved project in that they carry that through in some fashion to positive benefit to the Village. There is concern about a developer promising a wonderful development to get approved and then “selling every one of their buildings very promptly for maximum profit” and not delivering what the Village thought it would get. Mr. Rathje replied that he didn't think developers could be forced to put themselves in an economically disastrous position.

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Commission Chair Jirik inquired where this parcel is now compared to where it was supposed to be. Mr. Rathje informed him that there are no pads left. Commission Chair Jirik asked if they were built out. Commissioner Waechter noted that many office complexes have high scale restaurants located on the top or bottom floors. Ms Schuster added that they provide great views. Commissioner Nicholaou noted that one of the obstacles might be the cost per square foot compared to what the restaurateur has to charge for his/her said profit.

Mr. Skach discussed another approach involving innovative strategies and the idea of transferring development rights. He stated this involves taking aspects of that approved planned development and allowing it to be transferred to a nearby location, certainly through market means, but still allowing that potential to be tapped into; because economically, it is a waste to have that potential built in and not be able to have it come to fruition. He noted that it is probably not in our best interest. He suggested again that the developments get revisited to get some insight. Commission Chair Jirik agreed.

Commissioner McCormick went back to the Goal Statement suggesting that after the words "Residential Uses", that "Lyman Woods" be added.

Downtown

Commission Chair Jirik suggested that this could be looked to as the reference as this being well documented, well studied, and just put a reference to that process and direct the Council to that at which such point it completes and reaches fruition. He noted the alternative would be a second set of conclusions and a complete analysis which would be extremely time consuming which would take away from good work already being done. The group concurred.

Commissioner Waechter expressed concern that the Downtown businesses may feel isolated from the rest of the Village due to all the improvements occurring, and that it is important to tie in all the businesses and the development areas together. Commission Chair Jirik said he feels it is just the opposite; most of the group agreed. Commissioner Waechter stressed that his concern was that the Downtown needs to be "kept in the game." Mr. Skach said that Commissioner Waechter was making a great point because economically, the Village is only as strong as its weakest link and if any one of these areas under performs, it drags everything down. He added that it is important to have the whole Village get the same level of attention.

Commissioner Waechter then asked what the future is of the Post Office. Mr. Skach said that the Village has had several discussions with them and that the programming side of the USPS is in agreement that the bulk mail facility should not be at that site, but there is currently resistance to move from that location because it disrupts existing arrangements and contractual arrangements. He added that they currently do not have money for capital improvements. Mr. Skach noted that there would be additional pressure for something to happen there because those uses are not compatible with the downtown.

Review

Commission Chair Jirik suggested that the Commissions spend some time reviewing what they have accomplished in this first phase of the workshops and find out, through the group's opinion, what the next steps should be and then put some shape and direction to them. Commission Chair Jirik began the discussion stating a report needs to be made to the Mayor and Village Council, which will take some time to prepare. He noted that when he looks at the very valuable and vast number of things this group has spent a lot of time talking about, they fall into three categories. The first category would be to reclassify areas from one existing use category to another existing use. The second category would be to create sub categories of existing uses that do not include the full range of development possibilities, some parallel revision to the zoning ordinance. The third category would be to create several new categories of land use, with requisite changes to the zoning ordinance to support the Future Land Use Plan. Commission Chair Jirik noted that this is a lot of work that could be done using subcommittees and reporting back to the group or the possibility of a parallel processing. Mr. Skach reported that early last spring, some Council members had come to the EDC as a matter of course, and a discussion of the Future Land Use Plan ensued. Mr. Skach added that there might be more frequent iterations with the Council on

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least an annual cycle. The next step would be to come to the Council and show them all the areas that were covered and the discussions about them; though not all answers were derived, there was a concurrence to move and look in a certain direction. Also to be discussed would be the concept of Mixed Use. Commission Chair Jirik cited with the use of parallel processing the documentation that will go to the Council, a few more workshops should focus on prioritizing three categories of activities that could give some structure to the process.

Mr. Skach asked everyone if they wanted to meet again to recap and decide firmly on the next steps. He said the Strategic Planning Commission could have a rough draft for their review; Commission Chair Riordan and Commissioner Ryan concurred.

Commissioner Waechtler asked Mr. Rockwell when the EDC is going to present the Ogden Vision to the Council. Mr. Rockwell replied they would meet in mid-July, and said he would inform everyone of the date. Mr. Skach stressed that it is important for this group to maintain confidence and credibility with the Council, which means it is important for as many people to attend as possible. Mr. Rockwell noted that he, Mr. Skach, and the Village Manager will probably meet with a couple Council members at a time and give them a quick hard copy of the Ogden Vision, go through it, and see what their thoughts are before officially presenting it.

PC Chair Jirik suggested meeting again on July 14, at 7:00 p.m. The group concurred.

Members of the Plan Commission and the Strategic Planning Committee concluded discussions at 9:10 p.m.

ALAN JIRIK, COMMISSION CHAIR, PLAN COMMISSION
AND
MICHAEL RIORDAN, COMMISSION CHAIR, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION