

APPROVED MINUTES

MINUTES
OF A WORKSHOP DISCUSSION
WITH THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AND
MEMBERS OF THE PLAN COMMISSION
ON
SEPTEMBER 29, 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], EDC Chair Riordan began the discussions at 7:00 p.m.

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

PRESENT: Members of the Plan Commission: PC Chair Jirik, Commissioner Griesbaum, Commissioner Kahlke, Commissioner Matejczyk, Commissioner McCormick, Commissioner Nicholaou, Commissioner Stark, Commissioner Waechter

Members of the Strategic Planning Committee: EDC Chair Riordan, Commissioner Chalberg, Commissioner Ryan, Commissioner Weiss

STAFF

PRESENT: Joseph Skach, Director, Planning and Community Development
Steven Rockwell, Director, Economic Development
Amanda Browne, Planner
Lori Skotterud, Planner
Ginny Mindo, Administrative Assistant

GUESTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 8, 2003

Commissioner Nicholaou noted that a statement he made at the last meeting was not mentioned in the minutes and requested that “The Lyman Woods project had passed by just a handful of votes, which cost taxpayers, by the time it was all over, 16 to 18 million dollars in tax money between the Village and County park districts. Had the project gone ahead, it would have been a great plus for the Village, providing tax revenue, housing “empty nesters”, and it could have down-sized to and provided shoppers with area stores”.

EDC Chair Riordan asked if there was concurrence on the minutes from the workshop held September 8, 2003 with the proposed addition. The members of both Commissions concurred.

Downtown

The current draft preliminary Goal Statement read: Create a distinctly commercial/retail oriented corridor, supported by the appropriate land-use and zoning designations, that fosters a vibrant mix of commercial land uses, and economic environment and that is practical and efficient for both vehicles and pedestrians to use in support of local business.

Mr. Skach noted that there had been previous concurrence from the group that the Downtown efforts are moving in the right direction with the high level of focus and activity going and planning efforts on by other bodies and the Village will encourage it to continue.

Commissioner Nicholaou distributed a printed copies of a suggested Goal Statement for the downtown; it read "A distinctly commercial/retail corridor has been created utilizing the appropriate land-use and zoning designations. Future endeavors should continue to foster a vibrant mix of commercial entities through the continue use of land-use and zoning designations, while maintaining a compatible vehicle and pedestrian environment. It should be noted that the ultimate success of the Downtown area would depend upon the consumer services offered by its merchants". Commissioner Nicholaou noted that this Goal Statement reflects that the Downtown is well on its way, through the various projects Mr. Skach had mentioned, to being successful, but that the ultimate success will rely on the goods and services the merchants bring to the ir stores. Commissioner Matejczyk mentioned that the term 'vibrant mix' should be made more specific. Commissioner Nicholaou noted that this suggested Goal Statement was meant to be used as a "talking point", and he welcomed suggestions from the group. Commissioner Matejczyk suggested mentioning restaurants in the Goal Statement, noting that they tend to attract other restaurants.

Mr. Skach recalled two key ideas that came out of previous strategic planning discussions, the first being distinct retail orientation, and the second recognizing that both people and automobiles are going to coexist in this environment. He added that the follow-up to those key ideas could be creating a "living" Downtown by applying a Mixed Use land use designation.

Commissioner Matejczyk noted that what he thought may not work in the Downtown would be a large type grocery store, for example, a large Jewel. Commissioner Nicholaou agreed, adding that a smaller chain grocery store, for example, Kramer's, could do extremely well.

Commissioner Stark reminded everyone that the Downtown not only consists of Main Street, but also the areas on the east and west of Main Street, and the area north of the tracks. Mr. Skach commented that there had been recognition of a Downtown core, which could help unify the areas on the north and south sides of the tracks in some fashion with a core district and a transitional district. Commissioner Stark noted that there are three parts to the Downtown; one being privately owned, another being Village-owned, and the other being owned by the Post Office and the government. He then asked if the Village is trying to get Village-owned property into private hands. Mr. Skach said this was the goal of the Curtiss block redevelopment.

Commissioner Chalberg distributed the Village of Palatine's one page Downtown Land Use Guide citing that it has 39 redevelopment zones, many which had been acquired by the Village to redevelop. She noted that it is coded to display the various redevelopments from office to an underground pedestrian tunnel to the local parking deck. Mr. Skach noted that he would like to include the guide as an attachment to the minutes adding that it is an issue that has been discussed regarding the need and desire to update the Downtown Master Plan. He added that the starting point would most likely be the Curtiss block. Commissioner Griesbaum asked Commissioner Chalberg what the main theme was of

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the Palatine plan. Commissioner Chalberg replied that it is to create a greater vibrancy by bringing in more people. She added that there is very heavy residential, noting condominiums, town homes, row houses and said they are also bringing people in through their rail center. Commissioner Chalberg cited the Village went after individual spots identifying what they were, in some cases having the cooperation of the land and business owners, and in other cases acquiring the land. Commissioner Chalberg pointed out that significant was the fact that they are doing it all at once. EDC Chair Riordan asked what preceded that. Commissioner Chalberg replied four public meetings were held during the planning process and village residents and business owners were invited to participate before the group. Commissioner Kahlke made the comment "It's unbelievable the amount of buildings they are putting up".

EDC Chair Riordan suggested to Mr. Skach that it would a good time reorient the group. He began by recalling that the workshops began with the assembly wanting to review the Future Land Use Plan with the goal of putting together a comprehensive plan. He noted that currently the group is in the process of refining goal statements for each the strategic areas, and once that is done, the assembly will present these ideas to the Village Council to update them. Mr. Skach added that the intended goal would be the basis for establishing a comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Waechtler concurred and added that the current statement captures what this group wants to say about the Downtown. EDC Chair Riordan suggested incorporating what Commissioner Stark had mentioned about expanding it to encapsulate various areas of the Downtown to include the north side of the tracks, Forest Avenue and Curtiss Avenue. Commissioner Chalberg suggested that there be additional reference to residential and increased density. EDC Chair Riordan recommended adding those two suggestions to the Goal Statement with the staff wordsmithing it. EDC Chair Riordan stated that he had already suggested bullet points. Commissioner Chalberg said that it was a good idea. Mr. Skach noted that it was anticipated that the group would use bullet points.

Commissioner Stark stressed the importance of mentioning that the Downtown is also the core for institutions such as churches, the library, and the like. Commissioner Chalberg added that the theater and cultural events could be added. Commissioner McCormick inquired if the term "Mixed Use" was a reference to commercial oriented use as opposed to a cultural or governmental use. Commissioner Ryan suggested stating that the Downtown is the 'heart of the Village' in one of the bullet points. Commissioner Nicholaou suggested "synergistic center".

Commissioner Griesbaum stressed how critical it is to include in the Goal Statement all the activities that this group wants in the Downtown because it is setting it apart from the other communities. Commissioner Stark added that the transportation component [noting the train] is important and so obvious. Several group members acknowledged that the train, with it convenient schedule and location, was one of the main reasons they moved to Downers Grove.

Commissioner Weiss, being a new member of the Board, requested clarification that the goal of this workshop was to create some kind of "quasi" history on the Downtown and present it to the Council. EDC Chair Riordan explained that the group is in the process of putting together a comprehensive plan to clearly articulate what their vision is for the specific 13 areas and then to address the Village at large. He added that this would attract developers or other interested parties to clearly see what the vision is for Downers Grove.

Mr. Skach summarized, based on the "next steps", that they would focus on three key areas:

- 1) Housekeeping functions, which reclassify current areas from one existing land use to another based on their current and expected uses;
- 2) Modification to the Future Land Use Plan by exploration and creation of sub-categories of existing uses to direct/target development possibilities/goals, some

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possible subsequent refinement to zoning ordinance; 3) If needed, creation of new categories of Future Land Use Plan's land use varieties of mixed-use with requisite changes to the zoning ordinance to support the Future Land Use Plan. PC Chair Jirik noted that the three key initiatives could be worked on at the same time and not necessarily sequentially. Mr. Skach stated that potentially, this group could form a subcommittee to focus on the initiatives and this assembly would continue to meet on a less frequent basis for updates.

Revised proposed Goal Statement read: Create a distinctly commercial/retail oriented corridor, supported by the appropriate land-use and zoning designations, that fosters a vibrant mix of commercial land uses, and economic environment and that is practical and efficient for both vehicles and pedestrians to use in support of local business.

The group concurred that the next meeting would be on November 3, 2003, at 7:00pm.

Members of the Plan Commission and the Strategic Planning Committee concluded discussions at 7:45 p.m.

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