

**APPROVED  
MINUTES  
OF A WORKSHOP DISCUSSION  
WITH THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE  
OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AND  
MEMBERS OF THE PLAN COMMISSION  
ON  
JANUARY 20, 2003  
AT THE VILLAGE HALL, COMMITTEE ROOM  
IN THE VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE**

On behalf of the members of the Plan Commission [Commission], Chairman Jirik, and on behalf of the Strategic Planning Committee [Committee] of the Economic Development Commission, Commission Chair Riordan, began the discussions at 7:40 p.m.

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

**PRESENT:** Members of the Plan Commission: Commission Chair Jirik, Commissioner Griesbaum, Commissioner Kahlke, Commissioner Matejczyk, Commissioner Reynolds, Commissioner Waechtler  
Members of the Strategic Planning Committee: Commission Chair Riordan, Commissioner Bilek, Commissioner Chalberg, Commissioner Ryan

**STAFF**

**PRESENT:** Brian Pabst, Deputy Village Manager, Operations  
Kenneth Rathje, Director of Planning Services  
Steve Rockwell, Director, Economic Development  
Joseph Skach, Director, Redevelopment  
Catherine Schuster, Assistant Director, Economic Development  
Lori Skotterud, Redevelopment Specialist/Planner  
Kathy Desmarteau, Redevelopment Staff  
Ginny Mindo, Economic Development Staff

Chairman Riordan reviewed tentative discussion points for the discussion.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 19, 2002**

Commission Chair Jirik advised that the Plan Commission concurred with the minutes from the first workshop discussion on November 19, 2002 and approved their minutes from a regular meeting of the Plan Commission-only discussion on the subject on December 3, 2002.

Commission Chair Riordan requested if there was concurrence on the minutes from the first workshop on November 19, 2002. The members of the Strategic Planning Committee concurred.

Chairman Jirik requested introduction by Commission members and staff present. He then suggested the future draft minutes be distributed to both groups and considered for concurrence at subsequent workshops of the group.

## **PLAN COMMISSION PRESENTATION**

Commission Chair Jirik noted that Economic Development and Redevelopment had previously provided a substantial amount of information to the members of the Plan Commission. Consequently, the Plan Commission felt it would be beneficial for the Strategic Planning Committee to be briefed on the relationship between the Future Land Use Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. Chairman Jirik defined the Future Land Use Plan Map as a narrative and a guidance tool that is the result of public input and deliberation. It's a process of deliberate planning to guide the future development of the Village and a way to guide orderly development. He stated that the Zoning District Map [Zoning Map] outlines the legal zoning of each parcel of land in the Village. Chairman Jirik then defined the designations on the Future Land Use Map, comparing them to those on the Zoning District map:

*The Commercial designation*, displayed in red on the Future Land Use Map is displayed on the zoning ordinance as B1, B2, and B3 that categorize three different intensities of business use. B1 is designated as the lightest commercial such as small neighborhood stores, etc. Of note, residential uses are allowed in buildings devoted either exclusively to residences or in buildings containing residences. In addition, special use is allowed in a B1 zone. B2 is designated for a heavier business utilization, which includes permitted and special uses. Of note, the business designation of B1 is also allowed in B2. The B3 zone is even a heavier commercial use zone and can include special and permitted uses. Also, of note, B1 and B2 designations are allowed in the B3 zoning designation.

*The Office/Research designation*, displayed in light blue on the Future Land Use Map, is displayed on the Zoning Ordinance/Map as O/R. The categories for this include offices, churches, and banks. There is a short list of special uses. In addition, this zoning district is chosen for a very close proximity to residential.

*The Office Research and Manufacturing designation*, displayed in purple on the Future Land Use Map, is designated on the zoning ordinance/map as ORM, M1 or M2. M1, being a heavier usage and M2 being lighter. The categories for this would include manufacturing activities and light industry. Also included are permitted uses, special uses and some retail trade and restaurants.

Chairman Jirik then described Bulk Regulations that are requirements applicants must meet. These standards include lot area and width, height provisions, green space requirements, floor area and ratio, parking requirements and signage.

Chairman Jirik also described Planned Developments, which are developments for large parcels; these are a more customized development, designed to allow a more creative use of land.

Also described by Chairman Jirik were Exceptional Uses. In these uses, the public can pursue a petition for a desired use. This is another kind of tool to accommodate good, appropriate change, yet provide for the public input and public good, and ensure pursuit of good policy in a best means of government.

The last description was of Variations. These are a change to an ordinance regarding a property but mainly in residential zones. These include public hearings.

Mr. Rathje described the Zoning Board of Appeals, which is a fellow commission that deals with variations, special uses, and other planned developments under the ordinance.

Commissioner Ryan inquired as to when the Future Land Use Plan was last revised. Chairman Jirik replied that it is revised every 5-7 years. Mr. Rathje added that they take into account the level of development and maturity of the Village and whether there are any significant changes. He noted that lately there has been a significant amount of stability. Chairman Jirik stated that in 1995, there was a very detailed, "block by block" review. Mr. Rathje stated that there may be some inconsistencies. He also gave a brief example regarding the Home Depot site at Butterfield and I355 where the site is shown as Office Research and Manufacturing in the Future Land Use Plan and zoned B3 on the Zoning Map and how this area developed. Chairman Jirik replied that the Future Land

Use Plan is a guide that should be reviewed very purposefully from time to time. Mr. Bilek inquired as to when a review of the Zoning Map was last done. Mr. Rathje responded replying that the map is republished every March 15 to reflect the previous year's changes. He then described how modifications are made, stating that they are Council or staff driven.

Commission Chair Riordan thanked Commission Chair Jirik for the Plan Commission's presentation and in the interest of time constraints, some follow-up, background information requested by the Plan Commission members from Redevelopment, would be kept to a minimum to allow further discussion on the substantive issues.

Mr. Skach began by reviewing some of the previous discussions of certain areas in the Village, previously discussed by the committee, and subsequently, on commercial land use designations that have potential for revenue generation, and from the Committee's economic development viewpoint, may benefit from an updated vision for what those areas of the Village could or should be. Some of these areas consistently discussed included the 75<sup>th</sup> and Lemont and 63<sup>rd</sup> and Woodward areas and what options might be considered. Mr. Skach noted that as a preliminary way to illustrate the Committee's concerns, certain indicators researched were equalized assessed values (EAVs) for these two areas, as they have been the subjects of much previous discussion. Mr. Skach noted that in review of these properties, as a sample, the Strategic Planning Committee began to consider whether our current land use designations, and developments they might foster, could be re-evaluated to not only address sound planning and compatible/desirable development, but advantageous economic development goals as well.

Ms. Lori Skotterud summarized preliminary information from 1995 through 2001, suggesting that the 63<sup>rd</sup> and Woodward and 75<sup>th</sup> and Lemont areas appear to be, from an EAV standpoint, lagging somewhat behind their neighbors in the Villages of Woodridge and Darien. The four corners at 75<sup>th</sup> and Lemont include the NW corner being the Grove site, and NE site is the Downers park Plaza site, the SE site the Chestnut Court of Darien site and the SW site is the Woodgrove Festival of Woodridge site.

It was suggested by several members that there most likely was some form of assistance or other type of intervention given in both neighboring communities facilitating more recent redevelopment that probably resulted in the increase in EAV versus that of the Village sites but that this trend could be reversed.

The group concurred on one question of how might the Downers Grove properties be structured in a manner to not only yield sound planning and desirable and compatible development, but to continue to allow fiscal growth in the Village. Mr. Rathje noted that at The Grove site, there is more parking. Ms. Chalberg pointed out that, in terms of potential use of the land, there is less parking at the Downers Park Plaza and more building as opposed to The Grove site. She believed that the Downers Park Plaza site is "getting a better bang for the buck." Mr. Rathje suggested that there might be value in exploring any gap between how well the existing properties are doing, and how much better The Grove would do with more structures. Mr. Bilek commented that the area of the buildings should not matter in terms of overall EAV per square foot of total site comparisons but the issue to focus on is where do these properties go from their existing conditions and can we afford a wait and see approach. Mr. Skach added that this is something that the Strategic Planning Committee and Redevelopment believed that discussions such as these could be evaluating and that The Grove site as well as others, may be underutilized, but that these are the types of issues that need further evaluation. Mr. Bilek and others added that they felt that this also had to do with the difference in aggressiveness of the ownership of those parcels. Mr. Skach suggested that the land use designations, and if felt by the group, the potential zoning mechanisms, be reviewed as one means to facilitate allowing a property that is not performing well a possible additional response to foster compatible but productive development; however, the Committee's and Redevelopment's previous discussions focused primarily on certain general areas, certain commercially oriented land use designations, and a listing or matrix of possible goals and objectives for those areas as briefed to the Village Council on July 20, 2002 with the intent of discussing these areas with the Plan Commission.

Mr. Skach suggested looking at all the areas identified on a preliminary basis by the Strategic Planning Committee and Redevelopment and seeing if the joint group concurs with looking at them as well. Chairman Riordan added and reiterated that the Economic Development Commission is responding to recommendations contained in the Gruen and Gruen report and a desire to explore smart growth. He suggested that during the

course of discussions, it may be good to look at what other communities in DuPage County are doing. Mr. Waechtler noted that financial incentives are also of importance in other Villages; that it is not all zoning. Mr. Skach noted that financial incentives play a role to an extent, but may likely play a diminishing role given the current and expected economic outlook and potentially more limits on what the Village could offer in direct monetary assistance. An important component that the Village can affect and control is the land use plan and if needed, potential zoning mechanisms. He added that these could enable the type of diversity the Village desires and needs from a physical standpoint and its needs from an economic development standpoint.

Commission Chair Riordan suggested that this group, jointly, could further explore Woodridge and Darien and other communities to determine what made their sites successful; however, this may take the focus away from initially evaluating Village sites as a joint body, and developing a guiding vision as noted by Mr. Riordan. The Strategic Planning Committee suggested a “brainstorming” session to explore “types of use” to help the group decide what this group might envision as appropriate for areas in general. But in particular, gateway sites to the Village and could a new mixed-use land use designation be beneficial. Ms. Chalberg suggested exploring other communities such as Geneva Commons and Danada Square to see what has made them successful. Mr. Griesbaum agreed that it is important to see where the economic value is driven, the value for citizens, and what would draw people from other communities to Downers Grove. Chairman Jirik suggested that the EDC come up with the concepts and bring them to the Plan Commission, who would then determine whether they were feasible or not. Mr. Skach and Rockwell agreed that this might not have a positive result, as this process should be done jointly between both bodies. The Strategic Planning Committee concurred. There was subsequent concurrence to the suggestion that the next meeting could consist of more qualitative discussions regarding the listing of potential focus areas in the matrix previously forwarded by the Strategic Planning Committee to members of the Plan Commission for the first meeting last November, as part of the matrix, to begin to articulate desirable qualities and general categories of land uses the group believes these areas could or should possess.

Chairman Jirik suggested that this group could meet again relatively quickly to review concepts, and those seen as positive, could be looked at further, not for specific application, but to develop them under current standards. The group then decided to meet again on February 3, 2003 at 7:00 p.m.

Plan Commission Chair Jirik and Strategic Planning Committee Chair Riordan concluded discussions at approximately 10:30 p.m.

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