

# APPROVED MINUTES

MINUTES  
OF A WORKSHOP DISCUSSION  
WITH THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE  
OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AND  
MEMBERS OF THE PLAN COMMISSION  
ON  
APRIL 7, 2003  
AT THE VILLAGE HALL, COMMITTEE ROOM  
IN THE VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE

On behalf of the members of the Plan Commission [PC], Chairman Jirik, and on behalf of the Economic Development Commission [EDC] Strategic Planning Committee [Committee], EDC Chair Riordan 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 Nicholau, Commissioner Waechter  
Members of the Strategic Planning Committee: Committee Chair Riordan, Commissioner Chalberg, Commissioner Ryan

## STAFF

**PRESENT:** Kenneth Rathje, Director of Planning Services  
Steve Rockwell, Director, Economic Development  
Joseph Skach, Director, Redevelopment  
Amanda Brown, Planning Services  
Lori Skotterud, Redevelopment Specialist/Planner  
Ginny Mindo, Economic Development Staff

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 17, 2003

PC and EDC Chairs Jirik and Riordan requested if there was concurrence on the minutes from the workshop on March 17, 2003. The members of both commissions concurred.

Commissioner Chalberg requested clarification on the sentence "Proposed to be removed from Goal Statement". Mr. Skach explained that the sentence meant that text that was underlined should be removed and that this would be changed to strike throughs.

EDC Chair Riordan stated that the topic of tonight's meeting would be to continue the discussion on Fairview and Maple Corridor.

## Fairview and Maple Corridor/ Forest/Rogers and Warren

Mr. Skach reiterated that discussions had not been concluded at the last meeting including the strip of land north of the BNSF being changed to a higher density housing versus Commercial as compared to the ORM that currently exists. EDC Chair Riordan said that he was under the impression that that discussion was finalized and that tonight the focus would be the west side of Main and Warren on the north side of the tracks. Mr. Skach agreed that that is part of the discussion and the central issue on the table was the ORM land use strip and the suggestion that it could change to a higher density housing land use designation versus Commercial uses. He also asked if the group would now discuss residential uses as well. Commissioner Waechter requested clarification on what specific site they were referring to. Mr. Rathje said that there was a strip of land from Prospect to Douglas Avenues.

## APPROVED MINUTES

Commissioner Chalberg noted that the Fairview and Maple Matrix description did not refer to high density residential corridor along the railroad tracks. Mr. Rathje referred to his notes and clarified his understanding of the areas that would potentially be affected per the previous discussions. Commissioner Chalberg asked if there was currently high density housing on the southwest corner of the area. Mr. Rathje replied that there was, from Grand east to Fairview. Commissioner Chalberg noted that there was a dentist's office at that location. Mr. Rathje suggested that Commissioner Chalberg was confusing the use with the Land Use Plan. He said the Land Use Plan shows that area as being designated Commercial down to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to go from high-density multi-family.

Mr. Rathje discussed other areas that could be designated Commercial including the area on Maple where there is a piano store and storage facility. He added that the cleaners on the north side of Maple could also be designated Commercial. He noted that if you pose the manufacturing lot size and setbacks plus the space needs for an industrial use, it would not match up with the constraints of the site of that property. Commissioner Matejczyk expressed concern that that commercial area was not really large enough to support major commercial enterprises. Mr. Rathje suggested enlarging it because it is currently too small to take advantage of the train station, parking and vehicular traffic. Commissioner Waechtler added that the strip mall that contains the White Hen, dry cleaners and laundromat is very functional. Mr. Rathje noted if a decision was going to be made based on traffic generation, then there would not be any additional commercial space anywhere, and that heavy traffic shows vibrancy.

Mr. Rockwell reported that the owner of property on the north side of the rail road tracks, Hank Porterfield, was in on April 7<sup>th</sup> indicating he has been trying to lease space for over a year and is very interested the commissions' conversations because he wants to know what to do next. He has been asked to bring in his property plans, etc. Commissioner Matejczyk noted that this group needs to find out why that area has been underutilized. Mr. Rathje cited that it might simply be because of the economic cycle. Commissioner Matejczyk added that the fact that there are so many small parcels there makes it difficult for anybody to come in and develop viable commercial establishments. Commissioner Waechtler stated that the Village could suggest to landlords that they combine sites to make for larger spaces.

Mr. Skach suggested the group recap where they left off at the last meeting. Mr. Skach reiterated that the tract in question was the ORM strip. PC Chair Jirik stated that he remembered this group discussing the strip of purple [ORM land use] and that someone had observed that there was high density residential all along Burlington, but the question is how can it transition to red [Commercial land use]. He cited that this is similar to a previous discussion regarding Finley where by giving it a path to progress, and if the market was there, it would go up and there would be an alternative path for it. Mr. Skach noted that there seems to be a general concurrence that ORM uses in the Village, the more industrial type uses, might be relocating somewhere else in the future thereby creating opportunities for the Village. He added that those types of industrial uses, historically often times along the tracks for economic reasons, may not be desirable anymore, as the downtown urbanizes and space needs increase, coupled with less expensive land prices further west and closer to major lines of communication.

PC Chair Jirik asked if the market would sustain if the area naturally went toward residential, that might provide the same desired population and energy to this smaller downtown-like area. Mr. Skach replied that is the general feeling, not dissimilar to the Belmont and Burlington discussion, and that this commercial area would tend to be neighborhood oriented.

Commissioner Chalberg inquired whether there is a category of mixing an apartment building with an office. Mr. Rathje responded that they could coexist with different zoning districts. Commissioner Chalberg then asked if the current ORM land use strip [M1 zoned] could be higher density residential and does that preclude putting office and research there. Mr. Rathje answered her by stating that the Village would have to take an aggressive stand of forcefully rezoning. Mr. Skach added that a petitioner could also do that once the Village designates the appropriate land use. Mr. Rathje noted that that is a very different situation. Commissioner Chalberg said that she was under the impression that this group was trying to reevaluate the manufacturing [ORM land use] in light of higher revenue generating opportunities. Mr. Rathje replied that the underlying zoning is M1 and if someone

## APPROVED MINUTES

were to come in there and ask for a rezoning to some kind of multifamily, there could be a peaceful coexistence between rezoning of one to a residential and the existence of another as a light manufacturing which has been the host zoning to the popular buildings west of Forest. Commissioner Matejczyk noted that as he takes the train into Chicago, he notices the kind of development that is along that corridor, and there is a lot of new high density residential going in. He added that high density and high quality commercial makes sense because it buffers the Village from the railroad. Mr. Rathje stated that this could be accommodated in several ways, the first being to put all B2 zoning in there, but that would open up some things and it may bring in retail commercial. He added that zoning changes can be made and if it is not a consistent sweep of one or the other a mixed-use within the realm of M1 for the office, R6 for the multifamily, and anything within that band be acceptable for R1 or M6 based on what has been developed. Commissioner Matejczyk noted that such a true mixed-use district would make it easier for the developer to come into those areas. He also noted that the size of the property is going to dictate who is going to develop it.

Mr. Skach suggested the group rediscuss mixed-use, the basic tenet for these discussions, referring to the list that was provided at the last meeting of what is permitted in the OR, noting OR provides for very little as noted by others, but it may be the basis to building an effective and flexible true mixed-use land use designation to create a mixed-use land designation that might be able to fit different areas. He added that the next step would be a commensurate zoning would need to be crafted to be able to do that. Mr. Rathje responded stating a new zoning district or category does not always need to be created and instead could be done with a narrative or a split use. PC Chair Jirik added that there are varieties of mixed-use and that it will be the challenge casting those. Mr. Skach added that due to bulk zoning controls the size of the tracts of land become a self regulating factor, and that a zoning district that is crafted as a result of a purposeful mixed-use land use could take that into account to allow for the smaller tracts of land as well as the bigger tracts. Mr. Rathje suggested not creating the many mixed-use zoning districts and instead have a category of mixed-use that doesn't necessarily describe any particular approach to any particular piece of property and then identify it on the map with a letter or number [i.e., mixed-use area 1 is 63<sup>rd</sup> and Woodward]. PC Chair Jirik stated that it would be complicated. He noted that it would make sense for this area to be designated for mixed-use that might include some commercial and residential; a mixed-use land use and corresponding zoning category which would require more detailed bulk criteria planning [e.g., height, buffers] and all of those things in casting what would be allowed in this kind of a neighborhood mixed-use.

Mr. Skach added for clarification that there is the Future Land Use Plan or Comprehensive Plan with a Land Use Designation, which provides Village desired general land uses information; and then there are specific types of zoning districts, for example "B" or business types that have specific types of rules. If an area is designated Mixed-use [land use], what it may require is that the discussions slip over into the zoning mechanics side temporarily, because if it is put on the Land Use Plan and a recommendation is made that it go on a land use map without having discussed how the mechanics would work using existing zoning districts, there is a risk of it becoming difficult to administer and understand for the public, as opposed to a purposeful mixed-use zoning district that takes the desirable aspects of existing zoning districts that are reflective of what this group wants to see. He noted that ordinarily the size of the land controls how tall and how much can go on a site through bulk controls such as FAR [floor area ratios], land coverage ratios, and by certain zoning mechanics details. PC Chair Jirik stated that he thought that this idea could be more easily accomplished because it could be drafted by cross-references to existing zoning aspects that are desirable to easily accommodate whatever resulting mixed-use zoning that is appropriate. Mr. Skach added that the B2 designation could be a very good place to start with respect to a specific mixed-use designation. PC Chair Jirik concurred and added that if some very aggressive person comes in and is doing things this group thinks are detrimental to the community, this group can stand by and say no, therefore encouraging certain paths forward. Commissioner Chalberg noted that there are two very important audiences, 1) the potential developer who has to understand what the goal is and 2) the people who have to administer it. Therefore, it has to be written in such a way that encourages what the commissions' desires are and makes it as easy for them to understand.

Commissioner Nicholaou returned to the discussion of Fairview and Maple stating that this area should be complementary to the downtown. He recalled the neighborhood where he grew up in Chicago where everyone walked from area to area. Mr. Rathje agreed that people do want to have a place to walk to, but if they are shopping heavily and carrying abundant packages, very few people will walk for that. Commissioner Matejczyk

## APPROVED MINUTES

asked if this group should encourage the Village to make sidewalks more available and easy. Mr. Rathje responded stating the present and past Councils have been pushing to get sidewalks on at least one side of all streets and have spent a lot of money to do that. Commissioner Matejczyk also suggested bike paths. Commissioner Waechtler suggested the use of shuttle buses connecting shopping areas. Commissioner Nicholaou added that this parcel has some very high residential use, including the proximity of the railroad stations. Commissioner Chalberg added that from a landscaping standpoint, it could be developed either with office or residential in such a way to really buffer that area.

Mr. Rockwell expressed concern that, with the designation of M1, there are continuing allowed uses that could be detrimental to the space. Mr. Skach agreed and brought back the issue of the possibility of a mixed-use land use designation. Mr. Rathje said that it would need to be rezoned and people would be effected by rezoning. Mr. Skach suggested that rezoning could occur by attrition through the market because once it is done by the Land Use Plan, the Village then has made an official policy statement, which is helpful when petitioners come in. Mr. Rockwell said that the entire area could be downzoned. Mr. Rathje explained that would be for the Council to determine. He added that if a downzoning is done, someone could make claim of it being a reduction in value and a reduction in the taking, then the Village would have to pay whatever the proportions share is and what the court says. Mr. Skach stated that is not the necessarily the case as downsizing is subject to interpretation; however, this would be a part of a public process to act in the best interest of the Village. PC Chair Jirik suggested waiting to see if the market forces lift and then decide on rezoning actions if required on the Village's part. Commissioner Chalberg added that whatever comes from that strip [ORM land use]of property, the EDC and/or Redevelopment can market it so the space is productive for the Village. Mr. Skach added that if a highest and best use analysis of those pieces were done, it would likely not come out as a lumberyard. He added that it would probably come out some combination of higher density housing, office/condominium or the like, which would certainly build in value. However, if it were designated as mixed-use, it would allow a variety of different kinds of uses that do respond to the market. Commissioner Chalberg suggested that there might be a place for such industrial uses at the industrial park. Mr. Skach explained that when a petitioner comes in, they may rezone on their own in order to sell the property and market the property, and it happens by a conscious market driven decision by the owner or potential owner versus the Village intervening. Commissioner Chalberg stated that by going through this process, both the EDC and the Plan Commission can go out and market Downers Grove in these various quadrants and within a period of 10 years there will be a change. Mr. Skach added that it is the Future Land Use Map and commensurate zoning that becomes the marketing tool.

Commissioner Waechtler brought back the subject of making Downers Grove more pedestrian friendly. Mr. Skach stated that the larger issue is the idea of walkable communities, which is a part of Smart Growth and moving ultimately towards a comprehensive plan.

Mr. Rathje restated that there is not a category for mixed-use that will meet all demands; there may need to be several mixed-uses. PC Chair Jirik was in total agreement. Mr. Rathje stated that he felt the area was appropriate for a mixed-use approach. He added that the category the commissions come up with might take on a completely different name once it is decided it should be. Mr. Rathje noted that there are currently broad categories now because the color red [Commercial land use]represents three different zoning districts. PC Chair Jirik suggested that an appropriate coloring could be developed, but suggested defining an appropriate mixed-use and then working out the boundaries. Mr. Rathje noted that it is important to rule out what should not go into the intersection.

Mr. Skach stated that what may be valid in this smaller urban core area is potentially having the mixed-use at the core with transitional uses surrounding areas. Commissioner Matejczyk added, speaking of transition, the bread company and lumberyard would probably leave within 5-10 years due to the value of the land. Mr. Rathje disagreed regarding the bread factory stating it is a central location for them and they should not be discouraged because they are so valuable to the Village. Mr. Skach noted that it would not preclude this group from stating in the Future Land Use Plan that we have determined it is a different designation. PC Chair Jirik inquired as to what the decision was. Mr. Rathje informed him that the eastern area would be shown as some type of mixed-use possibility. Mr. Skach wanted to know if he meant the entire area, because a section was going to be designated red. Commissioner Matejczyk questioned if the southwest area would be red. Mr. Skach said that it

## APPROVED MINUTES

might be, or it might become part of the eastern designated area, which will be something else. Mr. Rathje suggested that if the area was designated commercial, then it should have B2 zoning which, in itself, is a mixed-use zoning. A discussion ensued regarding the buildings on that property and their value. Mr. Skach stated that it is important to stipulate to semantics regarding conversations on land uses and zoning because if a zoning district, for example B2, is called mixed-use and then we talk about creating additional “mixed-use” zoning districts, there will be confusion. Mr. Skach then questioned if B2 really acts in the manner of the mixed-use discussed this evening. Mr. Rathje said it definitely does; it includes office, retail, and residential. He noted that the drafters of the ordinance had a mixed-use collection group of uses that they wanted to have in one place. Mr. Rockwell restated that the issue comes back to manufacturing, and if it is a mixed-use, it allows land use designations that may not benefit a particular site. Mr. Rathje repeated what he had said earlier, that mixed-use is a concept, not a category. Mr. Skach added that mixed-use has been recognized as a zoning category, and in order to call it a legitimate mixed-use with non-mutually exclusive uses, zoning mechanics issues would need to be examined. Mr. Rathje suggested moving back to the major goal and identify the areas and what direction this group want to go in. EDC Chair Riordan asked if the whole area should be designated as mixed-use. Mr. Rathje responded suggesting that as long as it is clear that there should be some kind of a commercial/residential element here and finish the details later, which is fine. He added that it’s an area worth giving a significant look at where manufacturing elements that are designated by purple [ORM land use] will probably be ruled out, the red [Commercial land use] will probably stay in the core in using higher density, retail functions with other uses while the purple areas will probably be more towards a lower density business and residential elements.

EDC Chair Riordan suggested discussing different mixed-uses – the center vs. the perimeters. Commissioner Chalberg suggested that they keep the area solid red except where the purple is, that it should change to red with stripes through it to show it is a mixed-use designation. Mr. Skach stated that there are two spectrums, 1) commercial-based or oriented mixed-use and 2) residentially based mixed-use. Commissioner Chalberg suggested Residential/Office.

Mr. Rathje began a discussion regarding the area along the tracks, noting that its depth was approximately 150 feet. He inquired if anyone accepted the concept of putting residential in there. He added that the setbacks would need to be shortened similar to Rosal’s property. Commissioner Chalberg said that she sees the possibility of row houses on Warren. Mr. Rathje suggested a 56 story apartment building with minimal setback. Commissioner Chalberg noted that it might block the sun for houses across the street. Commissioner Nicholaou said the answer lies in the multitude of communities that have already done it. He noted that, in regards to development along the Burlington Corridor, apartment building usage has not been popular; that it has gone more to owner occupied units; and he noted the necessity for long-term tax base. Mr. Rathje clarified that the term “apartment” is a construction type, not an ownership entity and that the Village cannot dictate ownership by zoning. He added that the land provides for only one row of townhomes, whereas with apartments, they can be stacked. Both Commissioners Chalberg and Nicholaou said they would not support that because it is low-density housing and has a “different feel”. Commissioner Nicholaou said that single structures would be extremely successful as are the row houses. Commissioner Chalberg cited the condominiums at Fairview and Rogers, stating that those work well there because there are apartments there already. She added that she could envision a multi-story condominium building on the Perma Seal site. Commissioner Ryan noted that Downers Grove is behind the times in development, because as he rides the train, he can see all the new developments in other cities and villages. He added that the train has drawing power because it is such easy transportation. Commissioner Nicholaou added that a number of people who are moving here from downtown would not complain about the noise of the train, because they are already conditioned to it. Mr. Rathje said it would be better to have office in there, but if value is the goal, then go condominium. He added if it’s going to be townhomes and offices only, residences would not be taller than three stories. Commissioner Matejczyk asked what is wrong with a 4-5 story building right where Hines Lumber is. Mr. Rathje suggested that before the next meeting, the Commission members review how tall the buildings are at Forest and Franklin, which are both four stories with a single corridor running down the middle. He added that they are as far as a shallow site, give or take a few feet. Commissioner Nicholaou stated that he would prefer to see a series of Parker Places [Georgian Courts] rather than a series of Morningsides. Mr. Rathje cited that people would then have small backyards up against the railroad tracks vs. a balcony, which does not interfere as much with the condominium owner’s lifestyle.

## APPROVED MINUTES

Mr. Rathje asked the Commission members if they would be satisfied if the property was designated as mixed-use. The group agreed. Then Mr. Rathje asked what kind of mixed-use would be appropriate. EDC Chair Riordan stated that, at this point, it could be refined later. Mr. Rathje suggested following up with what was determined this evening so everyone understands what the ordinance says. He asked what should be the highest density. Commissioner Nicholaou suggested 60 feet. Commissioner Chalberg agreed. Mr. Skach reported he was in many discussions with the Land Use Review Task Force and this area is being considered as a downtown core that allows a certain height limit, and if it is set back it can go a little bit higher. He added that in addition, the downtown transition allowed for buildings to go closer to the street to lessen those setbacks to still have an urban feel and to have certain number of commercial uses as a part of the residential. Mr. Skach stated that the question is should this go multifamily beyond townhome.

Mr. Skach requested clarification as to what areas were going to be designated traditional red [Commercial] or mixed-use Commercial. Commissioner Chalberg responded she felt it should be some type of mixed. Mr. Rathje said that it should be shown as a mixed-use reflecting higher density residential and commercial office. Mr. Skach suggested residential/office mixed-use, commercial core mixed-use.

EDC Chair Riordan said at the next meeting the discussion will be on Ogden Avenue and suggested the commissioners read the Ogden Plan. Ms. Mindo said she would mail a copy to everyone. Mr. Skach added that a central issue on Ogden is its recognition as an automotive corridor. Mr. Rockwell suggested meeting again on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. The group concurred.

Members of the Plan Commission and the Strategic Planning Committee concluded discussions at 8:55 p.m.

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