

Village of Lemont
Planning and Zoning Commission
Special Meeting of June 4, 2014

A special meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission for the Village of Lemont was held at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 21, 2014 in the second floor Board Room of the Village Hall, 418 Main Street, Lemont, Illinois.

I. Call TO ORDER

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Spinelli called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Verify Quorum

Upon roll call the following were:

Present: Kwasneski, Maher, McGleam, Sanderson, Spinelli

Absent: Sullivan

Planning and Economic Development Director Charity Jones, Planner Martha Glas, and Village Trustee Ron Stapleton were also present

II. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Spinelli thanked the Commission and the audience for attending this special meeting.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

IV. ACTION ITEMS

None

V. GENERAL DISCUSSION

A. Comprehensive Plan Update – Future Land Use Element

Mrs. Jones also thanked the Commission for attending the meeting this evening. Staff has been working on finishing up the Future Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan, which includes the map as well as recommendations related to the built-in environment. At the end of January and the beginning of February there were two public workshops regarding the Future Land Use. Staff brought that information back

to the Commission and received their input. Staff has taken the various public workshop maps that were hand drawn, with the feedback from the Commission and have come up with a composite of two different scenarios. She said they will also go through the vision and guiding principles of that element. There are a couple of topics related to residential design considerations that she would like to get the Commission's feedback on.

Mrs. Jones then went over the different Future Land Use Districts. She then passed out to the Commission the hand out that was given at the public workshop listing the different districts. She stated something that she developed when putting the maps together was creating a district that was called residential infill. This would get applied to everything that is a built-out subdivision or neighborhood.

Commissioner Spinelli asked if infill would also be a teardown.

Mrs. Jones stated it could be. This is just easier than trying to figure out how to apply the various designations, because they are shifting away from labeling all the existing residential. Rather than trying to apply these new categories to old developments it is just easier to label them as existing and anything new in those areas will fit in to what is existing. It also helps when they get into the analysis component. To have it as a separate category then they don't have to worry about the computer calculating new growth in areas that are already developed.

Mrs. Jones then read and explained each of the different categories. She said just like all the other chapters there will be a vision statement and guiding principles. This chapter is a little unique and has two sections. One is historic preservation and the other is community character with the future land use falling in the section of community character. The vision statement is: In 2030 Lemont buildings, structures, and patterns of development will reinforce our community's unique character, although larger in area and in population Lemont will retain its small town charm and sense of community.

Mrs. Jones said the guiding principles for historic preservation are:

- Architecturally and historically significant buildings are a key contributor to our sense of place, as such these buildings need to be preserved and redevelopments of nearby properties need to be compatible with their historic surroundings.
- The I & M Canal and accompany towpath is our community's single most vital historic asset.
- Lemont's public art plays an important role in celebrating our rich history and beautifying our community.

The guiding principles for community character are:

- Maintaining our community character depends largely on ensuring that new development respects existing community character, architecture, and site design.
- Lemont's unique topography sets it apart from other communities in the area and flattening of our natural varied topography diminishes our community character.

- Lemont's skyline viewed from the Des Plaines River Valley is an important view corridor and key component of the community's visual identity.
- Downtown Lemont is the cornerstone of our community's historic charm and improvements to make it a thriving mixed use district are vital to the success of this plan.
- Lemont's small town charm can be supportive through design features and new development that foster community interaction.

She stated the wording of these principles have changed just a little as they have gone through them. She said they will talk about the Future Land Use first. She showed on the overhead the proposed Future Land Use map. Mrs. Jones stated she has mapped everything south of the Sanitary & Ship Canal. Everything north still needs to be mapped, however there was no public input that was any different than what was existing there. There are two pieces that aren't included, which she showed on the map, and the reason why is because they were in the process of working out a boundary agreement with Homer Glen. The proposed boundary line would be from Archer Avenue to the county line.

Mrs. Jones then explained what the different colors meant on the map. She said she did two different scenarios based on areas from the public workshops or if it was an area where there was no input but she felt there were two alternatives that could go there. She stated on some of the larger areas they might feel that the whole area is marked as one category but feel it should only be half the size. She said that can be adjusted and it will be coming back before the Commission again.

Mrs. Jones handed out a list of areas where the two maps are not the same. She would like to focus on these areas and get the Commission's feedback. She will then send a copy of the full map via email to the Commission so they can look at their leisure. She explained to the Commission the software product she uses and how it can help them. The first area they will look at is south of 127th between Rolling Meadows and I-355. On the first map it showed this area as employment center and the other map it was conventional neighborhood. It is currently zoned as commercial.

Commissioner Spinelli said when he moved into the area 12 to 13 years ago he had known that it was suppose to be commercial. Knowing that they do not have any access to 127th and seeing the trend west of the highway he feels that they should expand it with some type of residential component. Commercial property would want direct access and would not be successful because they do not have direct access there.

Commissioner Sanderson stated he thinks townhomes would be a great idea there. He thinks out in Vernon Hills they have some big employment centers that enter off a residential road. He does not see retail going there but he would be open to either residential or an employment center going there.

Mrs. Jones said you do not have to be tied to one or the other. For certain key sites particularly commercial ones where they are open to either retail or employment center

they can develop a matrix as a supplement to the Future Land Use map. It would show one that is preferred but it would should a possible alternative as well.

Commissioner Maher stated he thinks it should stay commercial. They have their access to I-355 and no commercial on any of the four corners. He understands the access issue and does not feel it should be retail. It is a viable option from a commercial perspective. He said he would like to give this property some time. This is their only thoroughfare to I-355 and they have nothing of value to show for it.

Commissioner Kwasneski said he feels it should stay commercial so they can capitalize on having I-355 there.

Commissioner McGleam stated he agreed.

Mrs. Jones said the next property is across the way at the southeast corner of I-355 and 127th Street. The two scenarios were mixed use and community retail.

Commissioner Spinelli stated with community retail you would have restricted access with that property

Mrs. Jones said the Village does own that private access.

Commissioner Spinelli stated you would have a hard time from Cook County getting a full road access with the school entrance and light already there. He said he would like to see offices there rather than retail.

Commissioner Sanderson said he could see neighborhood retail going in there and not mixed use.

Mrs. Jones stated they have seen a proposal from a broker where there is commercial on the front end with residential behind.

Commissioner Sanderson stated he would not like that with the Park District being right there.

Chairman Spinelli said it would be better as a park component that could tie into the Township across the way.

Commissioner Maher stated it should stay retail or mixed use because it has great visibility from the tollway.

Mrs. Jones said it is only ten and a half acres and is probably more of a neighborhood retail rather than commercial retail. She said the next area would be Timberline to the end of Povalish Court. In front of Timberline Knolls there is a row of houses and on map one it is shown as employment center and on map two it is infill residential.

Discussion continued on what Timberline Knolls currently owns.

Chairman Spinelli stated he could see it as being part of Timberline Knolls and would put it as employment center.

Mrs. Jones said they are running out of usable space.

Commissioner Maher asked if there were any historical homes on that site.

Mrs. Jones stated they are not part of the historical district. The next property is located on 127th Street between St. Andrews and Prairie Lane. She showed two area lots that were shown on the map as mixed use or contemporary neighborhood. She said they could be residential rather than mixed use because there is existing residential and newer residential in the area. She feels it should be mixed use or contemporary residential because of the proximity to 127th and you have townhomes and condos in the area.

Chairman Spinelli said he thinks contemporary is better because you will only get the mixed use along the front of 127th Street.

Mrs. Jones stated you might be seeing mixed use more in Cook County because of the tax benefit associated with it. You don't have to have a large residential component to get a very large tax benefit from it. It might be advantageous to have some areas as mixed use because it can attract the retail.

Commissioner Sanderson said he has seen this where they built a 19,000 square foot building and then put a one bedroom apartment on it. It is not a true mixed use development.

Commissioner Maher stated if there is a benefit for putting a mixed use there then put it there. If someone wants to do a contemporary neighborhood there then they will come in and ask for it to change.

Mrs. Jones said for the other piece of property what would they like to see.

Commissioner Spinelli stated he would like to see it as residential because of the stub streets that lead into the area. If someone wants to change it to commercial they can come back and change it.

Mrs. Jones said she can take the front five acres and tag it as retail then the back remaining as residential or the front part as mixed use and back residential.

Chairman Spinelli stated whatever the depth is across the street for commercial then he would recommend doing the same for this property. The front could then be mixed use with residential in back.

Commissioner Maher said the farther away you get from 127th and State the retail space becomes less and less desirable.

Mrs. Jones stated he was correct. It would still be a retail category and it could be like a salon or insurance agent in there.

Commissioner Maher said then the question is do they want something like that in there. He feels continuing the townhouses would be a better fit for the area.

Mrs. Jones stated it will be mixed use for the first property on the west and then residential on the east property. The next big area is the east side of State Street from 129th Street south. One showed it as an employment center all the way down and the other had it split between mixed use and multi family. They also showed the church parcel as going retail.

Chairman Spinelli said he agreed with the retail.

Commissioner McGleam stated he thinks it would be a good employment center site.

Commissioner Maher said he would love to see retail in there. However, as you continue south from State Street the property become less viable. The corner could be commercial because of the I-355 connection. He stated they have examples in the area that retail is not shining other than the big box stores. There is no big residential going up in that area. He said he could either see residential or employment center.

Mrs. Jones stated there is a case that could be made for high density residential which could be very viable there. Apartment complexes like to be on busier streets because they like the visibility. She said Commissioner Maher did bring up a lot of good points regarding retail. The traffic counts on State Street south of 127th are not that great, but the ones on Archer are good. Retail lives and dies on density and traffic counts.

Chairman Spinelli said he feels the strip malls in front of Target would be more productive if they sold a more convenient type product like Dunkin Donuts.

Commissioner Maher stated they did have big names in the strip mall but it does not have the daytime traffic to support it.

Commissioner Sanderson said he thinks it will be some type of residential.

Mrs. Jones stated she will take a look at the area and see what their options are for residential. The next area is north of Archer between Ashbury and Ashford Drive. She has one as conventional neighborhood and the other as contemporary neighborhood.

Chairman Spinelli and Commissioner Maher said they think it should be conventional.

The next area would be the northwest corner of 131st and Bell Road. The property is currently zoned commercial and they have it as neighborhood retail or mixed use.

All Commissioners agreed it should stay retail.

Mrs. Jones said west of Bell Road across from the Church of Nazarene is shown as multi family or contemporary neighborhood.

Chairman Spinelli stated he remembers talking about making it commercial along Bell Road with residential behind it. Because of the power lines that run through there they were going to have some type of medium density with commercial up front. There is no connectivity east/west or north/south.

Mrs. Jones said she can make it a mix of multi family and commercial

Chairman Spinelli stated he can see it as a mixed zoning on the site but not as a mixed use.

Mrs. Jones said the next property is west of Bell, north of Archer but south of Main known as Montefiori. It was shown as employment center and the other retail. It has mixed zoning currently with some residential and some commercial and it would be accessed off of Archer.

Commissioner Maher stated he thinks the houses that are there should be left residential. He does not see that side becoming commercial because of the hills on that side.

Chairman Spinelli said he could see someone purchasing it as its entirety, then clear it out so you have visibility to the hill. He would hate to tag it as residential because once those houses go he does not see someone wanting to build a house right there on that major intersection. He stated he would show it as retail for that corner.

Mrs. Jones stated on the north side of Main, west of the ComEd Row is the next section. She said it shows as employment center or industrial. She sees it as light industrial.

All the Commissioners agreed.

The next area is Mt. Assisi with it being shown on one map as institutional and the other as employment center. Due to the large campus, there might be some type of business that would want their campus facility to be there.

Chairman Spinelli said he can see them converting some of the school into residential.

Commissioner Sanderson stated they could expand and convert it into more senior living.

Mrs. Jones said they could leave it as institutional so if it ever decides to change hands somebody would have to come to them and they could be open for suggestions. Or they could mark it as something they would like to see in the future like a business area or residential.

Chairman Spinelli stated he would keep it as is so they have the flexibility. He said until they know what someone is coming in for with this property; they would also be looking at the golf course and what it is operating at. He would hate to push it as residential and someone comes in and wants to use it as institutional.

Mrs. Jones said the last piece of property is Central School which is similar to Mt. Assisi.

Commissioner Maher stated he would leave it as institutional because he feels it will open up again.

Commissioner Kwasneski said he agreed.

Mrs. Jones said she will make these revisions and then send to the Commission the updated version for them to look at. She stated now they will talk about some items related to residential design. They had talked about 360 design with the Kettering subdivision. She asked if they wanted to incorporate some of that language related to those principles in the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Sanderson asked why don't they put it in the UDO.

Chairman Spinelli stated he would be hesitant about putting structural design in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mrs. Jones said she does not want to write these design standards but would like to give general policy guidance.

Chairman Spinelli stated he does not understand how you would define that within the Comprehensive Plan. He feels you might be introducing to many layers of the Comprehensive Plan for a residential area.

Mrs. Jones further explained how their goals and objectives come from the Comprehensive Plan.

All Commissioners agreed to have a statement in the Comprehensive Plan regarding 360 architect.

Mrs. Jones said the next thing would be if they wanted to give any guidance to architecture specifically. The UDO and the Comprehensive Plan practically give no guidance on design of homes. The only guidance they have is there is precedence with

PUD's and a certain percentage of brick being required on the home. In the UDO, they do not want the houses to look the same.

Chairman Spinelli stated he cautions doing this because the city of Joliet did something similar and it caused a lot of builders to leave.

Mrs. Jones said she is talking about exteriors. She stated she could send Plainfield's residential guidelines as an example of what would not go in the Comprehensive Plan but something that might be an outcome of policies in a Comprehensive Plan. It could be a standalone document or it could go in the UDO.

Mrs. Jones stated she wanted to talk about traditional versus post modern architecture. She would like to get the Commission's opinion in regards to this before she spends any more time on it. She then showed pictures of different types of housing design and explained the differences between the traditional versus modern.

Commissioner Sanderson said he would rather have builders following the market. He is all for brick or having standards for vinyl siding, but he does not want to get into styles and dictating them.

Mrs. Jones stated you can get very specific, which may be appropriate in an R-4A Infill environment or you can be general and state things you don't want. She then continued to show different pictures and explained the differences in style.

Commissioner Maher said he does not have a problem with any of these homes.

Commissioner McGleam stated he likes the variation.

Chairman Spinelli asked if staff was looking to potentially adopted guidelines similar to Plainfield where the Village is going to say a certain percentage has to be a certain style.

Mrs. Jones said she is not and she is just recommending.

Commissioner Maher stated he thinks this should wait till the Comprehensive Plan is finished.

Chairman Spinelli asked if it could be its own standalone document with maybe a reference in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mrs. Jones said it could. She is not looking to develop any standards in the Comprehensive Plan. She is looking from a policy perspective as to where the Village is interested in going with regard to residential design.

Commissioner Sanderson stated he feels that there are standards that they want and there should be some kind of a guide. However, he does not want to be dictating what style of home they can build.

Commissioner Maher said he feels they should get through the Comprehensive Plan and then worry about this after.

Mrs. Jones stated they could have a recommendation or statement in the Comprehensive Plan that they develop residential design guidelines.

All Commissioners agreed.

Discussion continued on whether to have a statement in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mrs. Glas said they do have a chapter about the built environment so they did have to say something in reference to the built environment.

Mrs. Jones stated this will be a process to figure out, but to Mrs. Glas's point they do have to put a few sentences there to finish the chapter. She said she will forward Plainfield's design guidelines just as a reference.

B. Comprehensive Plan Update – Level of Service Standard for Parks

Mrs. Glas said when they did the Natural Resources Element they had talked about adding a level of service standards for the parks. This would be a way to measure where they are at and to give them guidance on whether they need to add parks or take away parks. It began by first classifying the parks. There are four classifications which included a Mini Park, Neighborhood Park, Community Park, and a Special Use Park. She will go through how they classify each of the parks, put their existing parks into each category, and then map it to see where those parks are. She stated then they can see where the level of service is for all the parks.

Commissioner Maher asked if they had talked with the Park District in regards to this.

Mrs. Glas stated they did but the Park District has their own classification. They made sure that they do line up with them and they do except for Community Park. Staff went with the recommendation for the amount of park space but the Park District feels that the service area should be bigger.

Mrs. Glas said Mini Park is an age specific playground and may include some passive recreation such as walking path or bike path. The size is generally under an acre and the service area is a quarter mile radius. It is meant to be within walking distance of the population it serves. The level of service is a half an acre per 1,000 people and the desirable size is an acre.

Commissioner Maher asked when she says walking path or bike path are they saying around the Mini Park or within the neighborhood.

Mrs. Glas stated within the actual parcel. It may include a picnic shelter, a walking path, or bike path in addition to a playground. If it is over an acre and it had those three amenities then it would be classified as a Neighborhood Park.

Commissioner Maher said one of the things that they have been trying to do is attach different areas of the community. He asked is it possible to have an alternative like paths that can take the place of a Mini Park.

Mrs. Glas stated one of their renditions had an idea of a linear park. If you start classifying them then you can start linking them.

Mrs. Jones said the actual location of proposed paths and interconnections are incorporated into the Active Transportation Plan.

Commissioner Maher stated he was wondering if a viable option to a Mini Park is a Linear Park. Like in the Kettering subdivision if part of that land was an actual trail that kind of went through the area that was paved there could be extensions coming in. It would be really nice to have something like a five mile trail system for connectivity. These Mini Parks are useful, but they are only useful to a small part of the population. He said if you had a trail or path that went around that whole Kettering subdivision that would be such a nice alternative rather than giving two lots.

Mrs. Glas showed a list of existing parks that the Park Districts has based on the amenities that they have. The list does not included school facilities that they might take a look at and add. She then showed a map of the distribution of Mini Parks and the radius that they serve. Of the ten parks that are currently in stock there are four that are underdeveloped.

Mrs. Glas said Neighborhood Park is defined as a playground in addition to some type of ball field or court. It is a Park that has good visibility and does not have scheduled games. The service area for this is a half mile radius. The recommended level of service is two acres per 1,000 people and the desired park size is 5 acres but can be smaller or larger if the amenities are provided. She showed a list of existing stock on the overhead.

Commissioner Maher stated the Northview Park should not be listed on there because it does have scheduled games and practices there.

Mrs. Glas said they could change that one to a Community Park or maybe reword the definition. She then showed the geographic area of the parks.

Discussion continued as to which parks have scheduled games or practices.

Mrs. Glas stated Community Parks have multiple amenities including playgrounds and multiple ball fields and courts. Fields and courts accommodate scheduled practices and games with vehicular access and parking that is required. The service area is a mile radius. The Park District's recommendation is a two mile radius. When they mapped that it was most of the town. The parks she has listed is Bambrick, Centennial and the Sanctuary.

Commissioner Maher said he would leave it at a two mile radius.

Mrs. Jones stated you can not think about as where they draw from currently but rather as the community expands or grows how many would you like to have. She said you can make it 1.5 miles.

Discussion continued as to what radius the Community Park should be at.

All Commissioners agreed that the radius should be at 1.5 miles.

Chairman Spinelli asked what the "Bowl" at Central School is considered.

Mrs. Jones said they would need to look at that and it might be included when they add in the school parks.

Mrs. Glas stated the last park is a Special Use type of park. It is one that offers a community a unique recreational opportunity. The size is dependent on the offerings. The park serves residents and may draw interest from neighboring communities. The Heritage Quarries Recreation Area would be in this category.

Mrs. Jones said she thinks the Township property could fit in this category.

Mrs. Glas stated the National Recreation and Parks Association recommends ten acres per 1,000 overall. Our existing stock comes to 10.9 acres per 1,000 using the 2012 population for Lemont. The proposed Level of Service would yield 12.2 so it yields what is higher than what is nationally recommended, but that is the minimum they recommend. The next step would be to look at the 2030 Land Use Plan to see if they can accommodate that amount of space.

Commissioner Maher asked if the sports complex got put in the downtown area would that be included.

Mrs. Glas said they did include the Village's property and might include the school properties.

Mrs. Jones stated they would have to think about that. If it is a pay to play that draws from outside of the community then it is not a community recreation amenity.

Discussion continued as to how they got 10.9 acres and more paved paths in the community.

Chairman Spinelli asked if there was any further discussion. None responded. He then called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kwasneski made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Maher to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion passed

Minutes prepared by Peggy Halper