

Village of Lemont
Planning and Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting of October 16, 2013

A meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission of the Village of Lemont was held at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 16, 2013 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 6:33 p.m. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance. He asked the audience to continue standing and to raise his/her right hand. Chairman Spinelli then administered the oath.

B. Verify Quorum

Upon roll call the following were:

Present: Kwasneski, Messer, Sanderson, Sullivan, Spinelli

Absent: Maher and McGleam

Planner Martha Glas and Village Trustee Ron Stapleton were also present.

C. Approval of Minutes: September 18, 2013 meeting

Commissioner Kwasneski made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Messer to approve the minutes from the September 18, 2013 meeting with no changes. A voice vote was taken:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion passed

II. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Spinelli greeted the audience. He stated there is a short agenda so hopefully we will be able to get through it quickly for those attending the meeting.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Case 13-08 – 706 Hickory Street Fence Variation. A public hearing for a variation to allow an existing 4 foot fence to remain in its current location.

Chairman Spinelli called for a motion to open the public hearing.

Commissioner Sullivan made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sanderson to open the public hearing for Case 13-08. A voice vote was taken:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion passed

Mrs. Glas said the subject property is located at 706 Hickory Street. She stated it is zoned R-4A which is single family preservation and infill. She said the variation is to allow a four (4) foot height fence to remain in its current location. Mrs. Glas stated the applicant constructed the fence prior to permit approval. She said the permit was applied for and it was under review at the time and by the time the comments came back the fence was constructed.

Mrs. Glas stated the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) regulates fence location based on the two figures, which are shown in staff's report on page two (2). She said the building on the left shows an "L" shaped footprint and the building on the right has a front protrusion. She stated the intent with the fence regulation is to allow a six (6) foot privacy fence around a lot line from the front corners of a house. Mrs. Glas said additionally, the UDO does allow a fence in the front yard, however it has to be decorative fence and up to three (3) feet in height.

Mrs. Glas presented the survey of the subject property on the overhead. She showed where the existing fence was constructed and where the fence should have been placed per the UDO. She stated the portion in the back that jets out about nine (9) feet is an addition to the house. Mrs. Glas said originally the home was just the small section in the front. Had it only been that small section on the home, the fence would have been permitted. She stated once that addition was added it had changed the footprint of the house and subsequently, the permitted location of the fence.

Mrs. Glas said when reviewing a variation there are three standards that are identified in the UDO. The first is the variation is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the UDO. She stated there are eight different factors that are identified and four are implacable. Mrs. Glas said the first two, promoting and protecting the general health and ensuring adequate light, air and privacy are not impacted by the variation. She stated the next is protecting the character of established residential neighborhoods. She said in this case as the home was originally constructed, a fence to the front of the house is more in character with the neighborhood rather than set back to where the addition is. However, a three (3) foot fence would have the same effect and would still be in character with the neighborhood. Mrs. Glas stated the other factor is conserving the value of land and buildings throughout the Village. She said the addition of a fence is generally seen as an improvement to a property as long as it is maintained, so it should not have an impact.

Mrs. Glas stated the second variation standard is the plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances and enforcement would impose exceptional hardships. She said in this case they do recognize that the addition is what changes the footprint. However, the

UDO does not go into those kinds of details and just states where the fence is allowed. She stated taking that into consideration; this particular request would be applicable to other properties that had that same building footprint.

Mrs. Glas said the third standard is it will not alter the essential character and will not be a substantial detriment to adjacent property. She stated as mentioned the character could still be maintained if the fence in the front was three (3) feet as opposed to what is existing which is four (4) feet. She said the property to the north is newer construction homes which are set back further than this house and the houses further south. Mrs. Glas stated the fence along the north side of the property is essentially the front yard of the other property. She said the fence regulations are written to protect adjacent property owners too. She stated with this particular case there is also the issue of topography, because this property does slope down to the north. Mrs. Glas said a three (3) foot fence for the neighbor to the north is actually higher because of the two (2) foot drop.

Mrs. Glas stated based on the fact that there is an inability to meet all three standards staff is recommending denial of the variance. She said the applicant is present to speak and answer any questions. She asked if the Board had any questions. None responded.

Anne Knight, 706 Hickory Street, stated she was the owner along with Jeff Luoma, who was her finance. Mr. Luoma was also present. She thanked the Board for taking the time to hear their variance petition. She said she wanted to apologize that this fence went in without a permit. Ms. Knight stated they gave a check to the fence company and they intended to get the permit. She said the reason why they went with this fence company was because they were the only one who identified that they can not put the fence all the way to the front line of the grass. She stated it is a big fence company and one hand was not talking to the other. Ms. Knight said the fence company did schedule installation before the permit was approved and it was her fault for not confirming there was a permit. She stated that night the salesman called not realizing that the fence was installed stating there was a problem with the permit.

Ms. Knight presented via power point, pictures of their two large dogs which are very tall. She also showed pictures of the house before and after the fence was installed. She said she will try to go through the standards quickly. She said in regards to the first standard the UDO only provides a diagram and does not show purpose or intent. Ms. Knight said their assessment of the diagram is to keep people from fencing in the front façade of their house.

Ms. Knight stated the next standard is to look at the unique circumstances resulting in practical difficulties. She said the language states hardship or practical difficulties. She stated they do understand that this is not some horrible hardship but they do feel it is a practical difficulty based on the topography of the property.

Ms. Knight said the last one is not altering the character of the neighborhood. She stated Mrs. Glas had pointed out that the fence would be consistent with the character of the neighborhood.

Ms. Knight stated she would like to talk about the first component under the first standard, which is promoting and protecting the general health. She said there is a three foot retaining wall on the north side that the neighborhood children have used as a jump or slide. She stated it has become a hazard in the neighborhood and by putting the fence up they have eliminated that opportunity.

Ms. Knight said the second component talks about privacy to the property. She stated due to the uniqueness of the lot the most private area of their yard is the side area that they would not be able to fence off. She said the house south is uphill from them and they have a second floor balcony that looks down onto their backyard. Ms. Knight stated the neighbors have two dogs that bark a lot. If the dogs see them then they start barking and the owners have to come down and get them. She said when they are on the side they can't see them and it makes everyone a lot happier.

Ms. Knight stated as far as protecting the character of the neighborhood she feels Mrs. Glas had covered that and she will show more pictures later in regards to this. She said regarding conserving the value of land, this is a fence that will increase the property value of their home. Ms. Knight stated this is more so when it is a straight line with the front of the house as apposed to dropping it back so far where you can't see it. She presented the diagram in the UDO again and stated when you look at the diagram of the house it is just protecting against a little jut out. She said for the first 110 years the house existed, the front part was the house until the addition was added to the back.

Ms. Knight said again in regards to unique circumstances they had talked about the hills and the topography. She stated it is a narrow lot that is unbuildable and whatever is there will stay there. She said you can not take this house down and build another unless you buy another lot next to it. Ms. Knight stated so improving the aesthetics to it is important. She said with the lot being so narrow, the retaining wall and mature trees there is limited space to enjoy. Ms. Knight stated they had not found a house similar in design to this. She said they did not build this addition and if they had built the addition straight back then there would not be this issue.

Ms. Knight stated this is not detrimental to the neighborhood, but is an improvement. She said they do have a petition that neighbors had signed in support of the fence and there are a few neighbors that are present at the meeting in support. She then presented pictures on the overhead of the fence and the little window on the side of the addition. She stated the fence is also blocking utility boxes which you would see if the fence was not there because the house to the north is set back. Ms. Knight said the neighbor to the south of them have a five foot fence which is directly in line with their fence. She stated even though the issue is not with that side, they are still maintaining that straight line which is consistent with the neighbors. Ms. Knight said the neighbors to the north of them have both expressed support for the fence.

Mr. Luoma said their one dog can definitely jump a three foot fence. He stated if this does not go through they would not be able to do the three feet fence and they would have to back the fence up the 22 feet.

Ms. Knight stated they have heard of other dogs in the area jumping four foot fences and attacking other dogs. She said their dogs would never attack anyone; however a passerby would not know this. She asked if the Board had any questions.

Chairman Spinelli said he did drive past the residence and stated the fence does look very nice. He asked if there was a patio area that they were trying to preserve.

Ms. Knight stated there is some patio furniture there and it is their most private area. She said it is a rustic mulch area.

Chairman Spinelli asked who owns the retaining wall that is to the north.

Ms. Knight said she thinks it is their wall. She stated the other two properties were part of one big lot and was subdivided. Ms. Knight then asked her neighbor Mr. Rinchich if he knew who owned the wall.

Richard Rinchich, 711 Hickory Street, Lemont, stated when the previous owner sold the lots to the north the deal he made with the developers was they would build the addition for the house and build the retaining wall to hold things in and make it look proper.

Chairman Spinelli thanked the petitioner and asked if there was anyone from audience that would like to come up and speak.

Mr. Rinchich said Hickory Street is unique and has many homes that are over 100 years old. He said other houses that were as small as the petitioners have been demolished. He stated the petitioners have said there was a mix-up with communication in regards to the fence going in. Mr. Rinchich said besides the street being unique there are 18 kids that live on the block that go to elementary and high school and 15 dogs. He stated there are a lot of dog walkers in their neighborhood and that additional height to fence is very beneficial. He said the fence is a safety factor for when Ms. Knight has one of her dogs out and a dog walks by. Mr. Rinchich stated the fence is in character with what the neighbors have next door. He stated six years ago, the vacant lot across the street from the petitioner, had a three foot high picket fence that went up to the sidewalk. He said as the petitioner stated these lots are not buildable unless you combine lots.

Mr. Rinchich stated the petitioner is a great neighbor. He said they care about the residents on the block and their dogs. He stated he is glad the fence is there to help with the retaining wall. He said one of his kids have fallen off that wall. Mr. Rinchich said the fence is a benefit, an addition and is in good character. He stated as much as staff recommends denial, he feels the safety, support, and the increase in lot values should be

well received by the Board. He said he recommends that the variation be passed and approved.

Chuck Cicora, 309 Logan Street, Lemont, said where the fence is, for 100 years that is where it would have been. He stated the house has changed only within the last 10 years with the addition. He said it would be detriment to the petitioners and the community if they had to tear down the fence.

Mrs. Glas stated prior to this meeting she did receive an email from another resident that was in support of this fence. She said she provided a paper copy of that email for the Commissioners. The email was from Michael Cherniss at 709 Hickory Street.

Chairman Spinelli asked if the Commission had any questions.

Commissioner Kwasneski asked if they had received any complaints.

Ms. Knight and Mr. Luoma stated they did not receive any complaints.

Chairman Spinelli called for a motion to close the public hearing.

Commissioner Kwasneski made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sanderson to close the public hearing for Case 13-08. A voice vote was taken:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion passed

Chairman Spinelli stated he wanted to defend staff in regards to Mr. Rinchich's comment. He said staff makes their recommendation strictly based on the zoning code. He stated if it does not comply then they have to recommend denial.

Ms. Knight said Mrs. Glas has been very helpful through all of this.

Chairman Spinelli asked staff if a three (3) foot high fence would be permitted.

Mrs. Glas stated yes.

Chairman Spinelli said then they are only requesting an additional foot height variance.

Mrs. Glas stated that is correct. She showed again on the overhead where a three foot decorative fence would be permitted.

Commissioner Sanderson said what is tough is when you look at both these diagrams, the front bump out is narrower than the back. He stated when you look at their house the front is wider then the setback bump. He asked if there was a two foot bump out would that still make that the corner. He stated at what point do you say that is their threshold.

Mrs. Glas stated they looked at the definition of façade and elevations. She said façade includes the face of the building and anything that has windows. She stated that bump out being nine and half feet does have a window. Mrs. Glas said there is nothing stating that the building has to articulate a certain depth. So whether it is 22 feet or 3 feet, there is nothing in the ordinance that states one is different then the other.

Commissioner Kwasneski asked if it does meet the decorative open design.

Mrs. Glas stated it does. She said if that addition was not put on then, a six (6) foot privacy fence would be allowed there. She stated some of their arguments that they are presenting can be achieved with a three foot fence.

Commissioner Messer asked if that was a gate right by the house and asked if it was wider than normal.

Ms. Knight stated it was and it was four feet wide which is normal.

Chairman Spinelli asked if there was any other access to the house on that side.

Mr. Luoma said on that side about five feet down by the jet out.

Commissioner Sullivan stated he does not have an issue with this. He said seeing young people invest in some of the oldest homes in this community is a huge asset. He stated he wished it would happen more in this town. Commissioner Sullivan said it is great that they just want to be outside which is missing in all communities these days. He stated they just have big dogs instead of small dogs. He said this is why they have the request for a variation, for unique circumstances like this.

Commissioner Sanderson and Commissioner Kwasneski both agreed.

Commissioner Spinelli said he does like the fence. He stated because a three foot fence would be allowed all the way to the sidewalk, he is only looking at a one foot variance from the height. He said the addition is only about 30% of the front façade. He stated he feels they are all in agreement and then called for a motion for recommendation.

Commissioner Sanderson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Messer to recommend to the Mayor and Village Board approval of the request for a variance to allow an existing four (4) foot fence to remain in its current location. A roll call vote was taken:

Ayes: Kwasneski, Sanderson, Messer, Sullivan, Spinelli

Nays: None

Motion passed

Chairman Spinelli then called for a motion for the Findings of Fact.

Commissioner Kwasneski made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sanderson to authorize the Chairman to approve the Findings of Fact for Case 13-08 as prepared by staff. A voice vote was taken:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion passed

IV. ACTION ITEMS

A. Lemont 2030 – Civic Engagement and Governance Element

Mrs. Glas said this element was presented at the last meeting. She stated it was revised based on some of the comments and feedback that they had received. She said the guiding principles started out with ten and have been reduced down to seven. Mrs. Glas stated some were removed because they sound more like recommendations and should this section should reflect values. She said nothing was completely removed but rather reworked into a different area based on whether it was a value or recommendation.

Mrs. Glas stated for this element they have come up with five goals. She said they are as follows:

1. Employ early involvement, transparency and good process design.
2. Provide inclusivity and accessibility of participation.
3. Encourage partnerships and define roles.
4. Promote education, capacity building and stewardship.
5. Practice good governance and accountability.

She stated from those five goals staff has come up with recommendations. She said from within the first action area the first goal is develop a civic engagement guide to be utilized for all projects and planning efforts. Mrs. Glas stated this comes from the fact that sometimes things happen quickly and you forget to let people know what is happening. She said this would guide staff as to what level of participation for the public is appropriate.

Mrs. Glas said the second goal is increase communications with the public. She stated this has been mentioned a number of times. She said the Village Board is also in line with this with their strategic plan. Mrs. Glas stated department heads are supposed to be trained so they can update the website quickly with information. She said the third goal is host public information meetings for all major public works projects. She stated this was in the 2002 plan and was carried over. She said this deals with a lot of phone calls that staff receives regarding the public being upset about not knowing why roads are being torn up. Mrs. Glas said the last goal for this element is community residents and stakeholders will support active participation in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. She stated the Plan is suppose to have input from the residents so having a goal that they will be active participants is key.

Mrs. Glas stated that covered action area one. She asked if the Commission had any questions or comments. None responded.

Mrs. Glas stated the next implementation area has two recommendations. She said the first is utilizing everyday language when making public notices announcements. She stated this was in the 2002 Plan that they planned on carrying over. Mrs. Glas said there is a lot of jargon in the field and the more simple text they use the more public participation they will receive. She stated the second is actively seeking opportunities to engage traditionally underrepresented groups. She said this is particularly important when engaging the youth. Mrs. Glas stated there is research that states the more you get young people exposed to civic duty the more active they will be in their community as adults.

Mrs. Glas said the next action area is three with three recommendations. The first is identify common goals between the Village and other taxing districts and pursue opportunities to partner. She stated this is another goal for the Village Board with their strategic planning. She stated this was in the 2002 Plan but was redefined so it becomes more specific. Mrs. Glas stated secondly encourage taxing districts to participate in the review of new development proposals. She said they currently do this and feel it is important to keep. She stated when there is a big proposal or if someone has an idea there is a technical review committee. She said everyone is involved and can comment on it. Mrs. Glas stated third is work with Village Commissions on project proposals that are within their area of interest. She said this was in the 2002 Plan, but is not sure how actively this is done. She stated there are other Commissions that meet and there is a disconnect with staff as to what they are doing, so there needs to be more of a connection and opportunity to work together.

Mrs. Glas stated in action area four there are three recommendations. She said the first is coordinate communication within all elements of the Comprehensive Plan. She stated all the different elements might have an educational piece to it. Mrs. Glas said keeping the participation plan of this piece as the guide for the other elements. She stated if they can increase the knowledge about a certain piece then you might get more participation. She said another recommendation is to support regional and issue oriented planning initiatives that positively impact Lemont. Mrs. Glas stated this is just realizing that Lemont is not in a bubble and that there are other things going on. She said the third recommendation is seek opportunities to collaborate with other agencies and organizations on education. She stated there are a lot of educational materials that are readily available so there is no reason to recreate things.

Mrs. Glas said the last action area also has three recommendations. She stated this area covers services that the Village provides. She stated in the 2002 Plan there were many recommendations that were specific to fire, water, sewer, telecommunications, etc. Mrs. Glas said the general idea is that the services the Village provides remain adequate as the Village grows. She stated they put it together as one recommendation. To ensure that services remain in adequate supply as the community grows and service demands increase. She said the second recommendation is increase efficiency in Village

processes through conservation, coordination and consolidation of services while maintaining quality public services. Mrs. Glas stated this is a goal that is evident in the Village strategic plan, which is referenced. She said lastly; maintain ethical code of conduct and accountability. She stated they do have an ethical code of conduct which is outlined in the Lemont Municipal Code. She said this is just acknowledging it and it is maintained.

Mrs. Glas asked if there were any questions or comments.

Commissioner Messer asked if they would be having the Village Attorney come in and do some training since there are two new Commissioners.

Mrs. Glas stated she would look into it and it would be a good idea to do that again.

Commissioner Kwasneski said he is not sure where this would fit in, but he has seen other municipality's websites and they are promoting new businesses coming into town. He asked if they did this and at what level.

Commissioner Messer stated there is another website called "I live Lemont" that does a good job promoting businesses in town.

Commissioner Kwasneski stated then maybe it is just promoting that website more.

Mrs. Glas said enhancing that website and the Village's website might help.

Trustee Stapleton stated they are trying to notify homeowners when construction is taking place. He said several weeks ago they had notified homeowners on First Street of the road construction with a diagram.

Chairman Spinelli said that will help limit the number of phone calls staff receives.

Mrs. Glas stated if they have any other comments or think of anything else to add to please notify staff.

B. Lemont 2030 – Built Environment Element Introduction

Mrs. Glas said the built environment is supposed to address the physical feel of the community. She stated some of this is done by visual preference surveys. She said the 2002 Plan addresses the built environment based on different geographical areas of Lemont. This included downtown, traditional neighborhoods, State Street (various segments), 127th Street and southeast of Archer Avenue.

Mrs. Glas stated there are six guiding principles. She then read all these principles.

1. Architecturally and historically significant buildings and assets will be preserved.
2. Lemont's history will continue to be celebrated through public art; the downtown mural will be maintained.

3. Residential, commercial and industrial properties will be well maintained; deteriorating properties will not be permitted to become a blighting deleterious influence on surrounding properties.
4. The Village's existing high standards of architectural design and landscaping will be maintained for new commercial, industrial, and residential development.
5. The physical environment of key gateways into Lemont will be improved to provide a welcoming experience for visitors.
6. Lemont will encourage design features that foster community interaction, such as front porches, walking trails, open spaces, gathering points, plazas, etc.

Commissioner Kwasneski asked about principle number four, would they be giving any compromise. He said they should be promoting the growth of the community.

Mrs. Glas stated the high standard it is referring to is the standards in the UDO for commercial and residential design standards. She said design standards regulate things such as brick or stone for the facade or adding articulation if there is more than 100 feet of length of a commercial wall. She stated if there is a project that does not meet those standards there is a little give but the intent is to keep architecture standards high to get quality design features.

Commissioner Kwasneski said if they can make a number seven and add Lemont should encourage sustainable design features for residential, commercial, and industrial properties.

Commissioner Sullivan asked what the plan was with handling old buildings that have become blighted and weeds are overgrown. He stated he is starting to see it more in Lemont and the downtown area. He said we are spending time worrying about 2030, however he is concerned with 2015.

Mrs. Glas stated that is more of a function of code enforcement which handles property maintenance. She said whether it is weeds or garbage, residents would get a ticket and then they would have to comply. She stated she does not feel it is specific in Lemont; with the downturn in the economy lots of communities saw an increase in code enforcement violations. Mrs. Glas said ticketing those means imposing another fine. She stated whether that works or not, especially when they are already in a financial bind is uncertain.

Commissioner Sullivan said the number one thing that people want to see in town is a vibrant downtown area. He stated the downtown has the oldest buildings and they are not going anywhere. He said he understands there is the recession and people don't have money, but take the path along the north end of the canal. Commissioner Sullivan stated that area is nothing but weeds and dog feces and that is the Village's responsibility. He said we are taking the time with the concern for a building that isn't even there yet, but we need to focus on what is there.

Mrs. Glas said not having those in place means when the opportunity does come up the Village is not ready to tell the prospective owner what we might want to see there. She stated the fact that there are buildings in the downtown area that are underutilized; there are owners that might want to sell. However, some are trying to sell higher than what the market can take. She said they will just continue to wait and pay taxes. Mrs. Glas stated there are recommendations in the plan to try and consolidate properties if the opportunity arises, but it is not something staff can do.

Discussion continued in regards to renting out buildings in the downtown area and promoting or working with new developments.

Mrs. Glas stated the chart in staff's report identifies everything was included in 2002. She said they will start with the Downtown. The first is a modest increase in the structural density of the downtown TIF is advised, to increase the assessed valuation and to abide by the principles of Transit-Oriented Development. Mrs. Glas stated this was partly achieved with the newer development like Lofts and Old Downtown Square. She said this would just be revised to reflect current ongoing efforts.

Mrs. Glas said next is buildings that are "non-contributing" structures in historic district should be considered for removal, and if the buildings are incompatible with their surroundings. She stated contributing or non-contributing status is one of several factors listed in the UDO to be considered by HPC (Historic Preservation Committee) when the property is up for demolition. Mrs. Glas said HPC has a list of homes in the historic district and they have identified what is contributing and non-contributing. She asked since it is already in the UDO do they want to just rely on that or is it more actively pursuing it.

Commissioner Spinelli stated since it is in the UDO to just let it run its course. He said they might think a building needs to be demolished but there still might be someone living there.

Mrs. Glas stated next is make capital improvements in and around the downtown to improve access, expand parking, and strengthen the connections between downtown and the quarry recreation area. She said this has been partly achieved, but needs to stay in there because they are continuing to work on these areas. Another is through landscaping, street furniture, and pedestrian path improvements, highlight the segment of the Illinois Michigan Canal in the downtown. Mrs. Glas stated this is partly achieved. She said Mrs. Jones noted, need to continue efforts to expand landscaping to south side of canal and addresses maintenance/improvement of the canal and canal wall. She stated we highlight the waterways as an asset to the community and there are some issues with the canal wall that need to be addressed. Next, is increasing the number of housing units in the downtown. Mrs. Glas said this was achieved in the downtown district, but will be revised to reflect the current situation.

Commissioner Kwasneski asked if there was emphasis on planning for more affordable housing for the younger, out of college age group. He said a lot of the housing is not

affordable for this age group. He stated there are many people his age that are moving out of town because they can't afford to live here.

Mrs. Glas stated she agreed. She said the Housing Element would address this more specific. She stated she knows one of the values for the Housing Element is to encourage or promote housing that is accessible to a range of people. Mrs. Glas said what they do to promote that is a different issue.

Commissioner Messer asked with that element can't you include rehabbing. He said this is what they were just talking about.

Mrs. Glas said that is a good point and it should include existing stock as well. She said the next one is reconstruct the old Stephen Street Bridge over the Sanitary Ship Canal to create a direct route to and from downtown and the MWRDGC property. She stated this is not complete and should be revised. Mrs. Glas said it should be revised to reflect the Active Transportation Plan Goal to use that bridge as one of several bike/pedestrian connections to Centennial Trail.

Chairman Spinelli said this is not likely because it would have to be higher than the railroad bridge. He stated this would be very expensive and it would be hard to get a permit to build it. He said your connection would just be using the State Street Bridge.

Mrs. Glas stated the next would be constructing a public plaza at the end of Stephen Street to create a public view on the Sanitary and Ship Canal. Improve the viaduct at the BNSF RR crossing to create a more appealing entry to this area. She said this is not complete and is open for discussion.

Commissioner Messer asked if this was where they were proposing to put the Sports Complex.

Trustee Stapleton said yes. He stated MWRD also bought some of the homes on Stephen Street. He said they are going to have a road going in there with a pump station. Trustee Stapleton stated they might also expand the quarry next to it as a collection basin for storms. He said he is not sure when this will happen.

Commissioner Sullivan stated that if the Sports Complex goes through it would change the whole demographics down there.

Trustee Stapleton said yes it would.

Mrs. Glas asked if the idea of a public plaza at the end of Stephen Street, regardless of what might happen with a big development, would be something to pursue in that area. All Commissioners agreed that it should be included.

Mrs. Glas stated next is pursuing a second grade-separated access, at minimum for pedestrians, across the BNSF RR between the downtown and the former Tri-Central

parcel. She said again this might come up if that property is redeveloped. She stated how that gets done will be determined if those plans ever come up.

Commissioner Messer said he feels it states that the Village is in support of developing that property.

Mrs. Glas said continuing on, plan and build a Village owned structured parking facility in the downtown. She stated this is complete, but should be revised to reflect current situation. She said as the Village or downtown grows, it is important to make sure that parking is adequate.

Commissioner Messer asked if there was signage stating free parking.

Trustee Stapleton stated there is a sign around Main Street saying free parking but after that there really is nothing.

Commissioner Sanderson and Commissioner Kwasneski stated they just found that out recently.

Mrs. Glas stated next is support redevelopment initiatives that conform to the goals and objectives of a unified downtown plan. She said this is complete and should be left in plan. Next, is favoring the assemblage of parcels and coordinate redevelopment over the piecemeal, uncoordinated development of individual parcels. Mrs. Glas said this is currently a Village policy, but difficult to enforce. She stated the recommendation is to leave it in the plan. She said in terms of downtown redevelopment it would be easier to do things with multiple parcels and get that bigger development. Mrs. Glas stated it is difficult to enforce because all of the parcels are individually owned and their intentions are not really inline with what the Village might want to do with the parcel or what they foresee.

Mrs. Glas said another is maintaining an unobstructed view of the historic Churches and Central School from the north gateway to the community. She stated this we would leave in plan with just some rewording so it is not so specific.

Mrs. Glas stated requiring the use of limestone in landscape plans, sign monuments, building facades to expand the quarry heritage theme throughout the community is next. She said current Village policy is to require limestone or products simulating limestone in monument signs and often requiring it on buildings in PUD's. She asked if it should be reworded to say "encourage".

Commissioner Kwasneski said it should say encourage because then it shows that the Village is willing to work with a developer.

Mrs. Glas said another is identifying properties that are in violation of outdoor storage regulations or other property maintenance on a regular basis, and cite violators for non-

compliance. She said this is the current policy. She stated the new Plan should have a more detailed analysis and recommendations related to code enforcement.

Mrs. Glas stated the next recommendation is eliminate signs that are larger than necessary to communicate their message to public. She said the next five recommendations have to do with signs, which sign regulations were reviewed extensively recently. She stated the recommendation would be to remove these from the Plan because the sign ordinance in the UDO addresses those concerns.

Mrs. Glas said continuing through, use the sign grant program as an incentive to businesses to erect signs that are constructed of high-quality materials and make a positive contribution to the streetscape. She stated this is currently done in the downtown TIF district. She said they were wondering if this should be expanded to areas beyond the TIF.

Commissioner Kwasneski stated it should.

Trustee Stapleton said the TIF district is going to disappear in about a year and a half. He stated there is a new TIF which would be north of the canal.

Mrs. Glas stated if they were going to expand it and do a grant project then they would have to find a funding mechanism for it.

Commissioner Kwasneski asked if they could search out those grants before we put it in as a recommendation.

Mrs. Glas said they could. She stated next is creating standards of commercial building design such that commercial building facades have the same richness of detail and quality of materials as single-family dwellings in Lemont. She stated since the writing of this, the UDO contains commercial design standards. She said the recommendation would be to reword and leave it in the Plan.

The next recommendation is creating a timely site plan and architectural elevation review procedure that requires approval of building site plans, architectural elevations, and landscape plans of all buildings prior to issuance of a building permit. She said there is a site development permit that is required if a development is over a certain square footage. She stated once that permit is issued then building permit gets reviewed. She said the recommendation would be to remove this from the Plan since it is already in practice.

Mrs. Glas said another is require design review of the appearance of all new and reconstructed commercial, industrial and multi-family residential buildings. She stated the UDO contains commercial design guidelines, but the only design review board is for the Historic District. She said the question is what level of design review is appropriate and are additional standards needed.

Commissioner Spinelli stated he thinks it is good.

Mrs. Glas asked if it should be left as what we currently have in the UDO and staff reviews it. All Commissioners agreed.

Mrs. Glas stated next is maintained and strengthen the identity of Lemont as Historic District. She said the recommendation is to leave it in the plan. She stated this is a key asset to the community.

Mrs. Glas said another recommendation is enhance the downtown as a town center with a balance of retail, entertainment, office, civic, and housing space. She stated the downtown district is intended to achieve this goal. She said there is a specific zoning district that is a DD district that has its own regulations and any property with that district has guidelines and recommendations.

Commissioner Messer stated it sounds redundant to what they talked about earlier with suggestions made in regards to having retail on ground level and residential above. He asked can't they be combined. He stated the other one he was looking at stated increase the number of housing units in the downtown by planning sites suitable for mixed use and residential buildings.

Mrs. Glas said she will look to change the wording and combine those. She said next is complete the Illinois and Michigan Canal as a public open space in downtown and as a bicycle path route to the Heritage Quarries recreation area and other bicycle paths. She stated the I&M path does connect to the Heritage Quarries and the Transportation Element will address bicycle and pedestrian paths. She said this recommendation would be moved to there or adjusted.

Mrs. Glas stated another is increase the number of housing units within walking one-half mile of the Metra Station, and in areas within approximately one mile of the Metra Station that have capacity for additional dwelling units. She said the downtown district is intended to achieve this goal. She stated the recommendation would be to leave and reference the downtown district. Next, is increase the number of public parking spaces in central locations in the downtown. Again, that is the goal of the downtown district so it will also be left in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mrs. Glas continued stating, amend the zoning ordinance to recognize existing single-family dwelling structures on particular blocks (north Stephen Street, east side; east Talcott Street, south side) as a permitted use. Allow adaptive re-use or redevelopment of these structures when compatible with the downtown environment. She said the status on that is single-family detached residential is a permitted use in the downtown. Adaptive reuse is also allowed, with guidance based on street type. She stated if you look at the downtown district in the UDO the type of development that is encouraged is based on the type of street that the property is on. Mrs. Glas said so it takes into effect the scale of the street and what is permitted. She stated the recommendation would be

since it is already addressed in downtown district then it is completed and will not need to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mrs. Glas said another is amend the zoning ordinance and other relevant planning tools to require an off-site or within-building parking contribution from new construction in the B-2 District. She stated B-2 no longer exists, but was replaced by the downtown district, which does not require a parking contribution for small developments. Larger developments are required to provide parking. She said this is open for discussion.

Trustee Stapleton stated the deal with the parking garage was anything that is built within 500 feet of the parking garage would not have to supply parking.

All Commissioners agreed that it would continue to stay that way.

Mrs. Glas said next is improve Stephen Street to the Sanitary & Ship canal and prepare plans and designs for a public plaza at the end of the street, as recommended by the 1994 Downtown Plan. She stated this is a repeat of the plaza which is not completed. She asked if the Commissioners agreed that was worth to pursue.

Commissioner Messer stated to combine this with the other one that talks about the plaza.

Mrs. Glas continue by saying if available, continue to use the TIF revenues to make capital improvements and provide grants for building revitalization projects that further the goals of the downtown plan. She said this was the current practice, so it would just be reworded to reflect current status and be left in Plan.

Mrs. Glas stated this would conclude the downtown district and now they would move on to Traditional Neighborhoods. She said first is continue opposition to use of the Illinois Central/Canadian National Railroad line as a high-speed rail route. She stated it has been determined that the high-speed rail route will not go through Lemont, so this will be removed from Plan.

Next, is to keep a lively streetscape, encourage use of the public sidewalks by local businesses, while ensuring pedestrian accessibility and community aesthetics are not compromised. She stated the comment is that it is complete and should be removed from Plan.

Mrs. Glas continued stating reduce the maximum height of dwellings to avoid construction of houses that are out of proportion to existing dwellings in the neighborhood. She said the R-4A guidelines were written to amend the allowable home size in older neighborhoods. By all accounts it has been successful, so it just needs to be reworded to reflect current status. Next, is reducing the number of non-conforming structures and uses in the Village. There were at least 68 non-conforming structures in 1999, and possibly many more that have not been documented. She stated the UDO does not allow replacement of non-conformities. She asked for discussion, is a stronger

approach needed. Mrs. Glas stated right now non-conformities are addressed when someone comes in to do something with their property.

Commissioner Sanderson stated he feels it needs to wait till the use or the owner changes.

All Commissioners agreed.

Mrs. Glas stated next would be State Street, from Illinois north. The recommendation is future capital improvements budgets should include landscaping and other beautification on the excess land beside the State Street Bridge. She said the status is not complete and should be left in Plan.

Mrs. Glas said from State Street, from Illinois to Peiffer. The first recommendation is encourage preservation of traditional style homes on busy arterial road environment, consider "Level II" home occupations, or adding an adaptive reuse category when a business renovates a home but the owner does not necessarily live in the home. She stated homes on State Street are zoned residential and do not allow any commercial use. She said they would reword, but leave policy in to revise zoning to allow limited commercial use of these existing homes as a way to extend the useful life of these often historic and charming structures.

Trustee Stapleton stated the problem is you can't park on State Street.

Mrs. Glas said this recommendation would be looking to make a revision in the zoning for the UDO to allow limited commercial use where right now it is residential.

Commissioner Sanderson stated the question is where do we see State Street going.

Chairman Spinelli said the point of this is to try and maintain the residential building by allowing an office in there. He stated like Trustee Stapleton said there is no parking on State Street and a lot of the side streets have no parking on that first block.

Mrs. Glas stated the idea of "limited commercial use" could be a use that does not require a lot of parking.

Chairman Spinelli said he is not sure if they need to reword it. He stated if it states "limited commercial use", then people will ask what is "limited". He said he thinks it should be kept as is and if people want to come in and ask for a variance then it gives the Commission and Village Board a right to refuse it.

All Commissioners agreed.

Mrs. Glas continued by saying, invest in streetscape improvements (parkway trees, decorative banners, etc.) to enhance property values. She said the status is partly completed and should be left in the Plan with more detail and recommendations.

Commissioner Messer stated they had the ash borer bug come through and we are not even funding replacement trees. He said now we are investing in streetscape. He asked where is that funding coming from.

Mrs. Glas said it is a recommendation that is in the Comprehensive Plan. She stated when they go to Public Works and state we need to come up with a plan for parkway trees they have a reason why. She stated she doesn't think Public Works has a tree care plan. Mrs. Glas said if it is part of the Plan and the Village and residents value their parkway trees, this gives them initiative to get something going.

Commissioner Messer asked if that would include funding it.

Trustee Stapleton stated the problem is there are so many trees affected by the ash borer beetle that they don't have enough funding. He said he will be attending a seminar in regards to the ash trees.

Discussion continued on replacing parkway trees.

Mrs. Glas said next would be study traffic signal/safe pedestrian crossing options at Logan and State. She stated this has been done already. Next, discourage/prohibit home occupations that make demands on parking. She said the UDO contains restrictions on home occupations related to parking and traffic generation. She stated the current practice is effective and no policy change is needed.

Mrs. Glas stated another is requiring site improvements before rezoning legal non-forming uses (medical and dental buildings in 800 block State Street). She said the status is unknown. The recommendation is these buildings are zoned commercial; policy not needed.

Mrs. Glas said the next section is State Street from Freehauf to 129th. The first recommendation is introduce new development design guidelines to require reduced front yard parking fields. She stated Mrs. Jones needed time to research this one.

Chairman Spinelli stated he thinks it would be to maintain site lines. He said he would not be in favor of reducing front yard parking areas. He stated you need to maintain that site line visual especially for that corridor.

Mrs. Glas said the next one is require brick/stone exteriors including limestone as the Lemont "signature". She stated it is not currently required for as of right development, but has often been a condition of PUD approvals. She said this is open for discussion, and they will change require to encourage.

Commissioner Sanderson stated it is not required but it is handled in the PUD which is good. He said then not every single building has it, but your larger PUD's they will get a chance to review it all.

Mrs. Glas said they will keep that one. She stated next is avoid narrow-lot “strip” development. She said the status is current policy, but difficult to enforce.

Commissioner Sanderson stated as long as they meet code requirements and the UDO covers it then you don’t need it.

Mrs. Glas stated another is requiring sidewalks/bikeways both sides of roadway. She said this is current policy and it is addressed in the Transportation Element. She stated it is not needed in this element.

Next, require bike racks be added to parking standards. She stated it is not currently required, but it is addressed in the Transportation Element so it is unnecessary here.

Mrs. Glas continued by saying signs – reduce the percentage of face that may be illuminated. She said the sign regulations have been amended and this can be removed. Next, preserve tree stands, especially east side of State. She stated the UDO currently contains tree preservation standards. She said this will be addressed in the natural resources development.

Mrs. Glas stated next is work with Lemont Plaza Shopping Center ownership to reconfigure the parking lot. Require more aggressive property maintenance. She said Lemont Plaza remains an issue, but do we want to include something specifically about this plaza.

All Commissioners agreed to remove.

Mrs. Glas said increase roadway capacity south of 127th street, perhaps adding a center turn lane was next. She stated this has been done and can be removed. She said the last recommendation is add street trees where parkways offer adequate planting spaces. Mrs. Glas stated the comment is it is unknown where street trees have been added, but new development has been required to install street trees. She stated this can be removed.

Mrs. Glas stated the next section is State Street from 129th to 132nd. She said the first recommendation is require improvements to road capacity as condition of “upzoning”. Improved circulation is needed. Connections to 129th Street and Walnut Street should be considered. She stated the UDO requires right-of-way improvements as conditions of development. She said this is addressed in transportation element.

Mrs. Glas said require sidewalks/bikeways both sides of roadway, is next. She said this is addressed in the Mobility Element. She stated next would be protect the natural drainage way on the east side of State. Mrs. Glas said the UDO contains numerous drainage regulations. She stated if this is necessary in the Comprehensive Plan, it would probably be best addressed in the Natural Resources Element.

Commissioner Spinelli stated he feels it is too specific for a Comprehensive Plan and should be left for the UDO.

Mrs. Glas stated another is requiring distinctive appearance in multi-family developments, use high quality exterior finishes, and creative site planning. She said the UDO contains some design standards for multi-family and most are approved via PUD, where additional design standards are often enforced. She stated they would leave this in the plan.

Mrs. Glas said the next section is 127th Street. She stated a harmonious streetscape design should be promoted on 127th Street, in anticipation of its creation as a new community gateway when the tollway is constructed. She asked the Commissioners if they felt it should be left in the Plan.

Commissioner Spinelli stated he felt it should not be included because the streetscape has already been created.

Discussion continued in regards to property between I355 and Smith Road.

Mrs. Glas said the next recommendation section is southeast of Archer Avenue. She stated where indicated by the use of overlays on the land use map “conservation design” should be practiced. This technique of land planning incorporates natural features into the subdivision design and uses only the most suitable soils and topography for construction purposes. Conservation design may be combined with cluster development, a related concept in which lot areas and setbacks are reduced within the “buildable” acreage to provide the developer an incentive to set aside the natural features. She said this is a long recommendation. Mrs. Glas stated there is the Kettering subdivision which is the first conservation design subdivision to be built in Lemont. She said there will be a subdivision coming up with a conservation design. She stated the idea is to create some kind of overlay that identifies where conservation should be done, rather than every development. Mrs. Glas said the idea would be to move this recommendation to the Natural Resources Element, which will identify areas of high ecological value or concern. She stated this concludes this element.

V. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mrs. Glas said next month there will not be anything for the Comprehensive Plan, it should be public hearings. She stated they will pick it up again in December.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Spinelli called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion passed

Minutes prepared by Peggy Halper