

MINUTES
Joint Meeting
Village Board, Planning and Zoning Board, Economic Development Commission
July 10, 2007 7:00 P.M.

Agenda
Business District Zoning for the Station Area & Streetscape Plan
Development of the Triangle

Attendees:

Village Board: Mayor Joe Leech, Tim Nearing, Virginia Lopez, Gene Swindle.
PZB: Laura Ruckebell, Glenn Pohlman, Joe Leech, Sr., Joe McDowell, Jr., Bob Long, Bob Mostellar, Maria Creekmore, Bill Stried.
EDC: Pat DiPersio, Jimmie Harris, Cy Race, Ken Jones, Bob Long, Gary Powell, Kurt Melander, Margo Nelson, Carl Simmons.
Various citizens.

Mayor Joe Leech gave introductory remarks, saying that we as a village need to decide “where we want to go”, that we have had various Plans drawn up by professional consultants in recent years that have been approved by the Village Board, that we need to follow these plans, including zoning and village ordinance change suggestions.

PZB Chairman Bob Mostellar gave introductory remarks, saying that he attended a recent meeting of the EDC, that as a new chairman of the PZB he became aware of the Station Area & Streetscape Plan for the first time.

Pat DiPersio, Director of Economic Development, gave introductory remarks, saying that he was hired to implement the Station Area & Streetscape Plan, as well as general economic development of the Village, and that he needs various zoning and ordinance changes, as well as incentives like a TIF district, to attract developers, that he has had developers turn away because the Plan recommendations are not in place.

Discussion:

Village Attorney Bob Long explained the concept of a Central Business District, the need for Mixed Use zoning as opposed to Shopping District zoning, the reasons and need for Signage ordinance and density zoning changes, why Mixed Use zoning comes first and then we look at Planned Unit Development (PUD).

Bob Mostellar explained that the Plan tries to tie the Central Business District to the North Point Marina.

PD: The Plans are a “road map” to development, help us to develop the Triangle, that developers are looking for proper zoning and incentives like TIF financing, if not there they lose interest. He talked to a developer last week that wants the Village to spend \$28,000 on a site plan that will help in marketing the site.

JL: half of the business buildings on Sheridan Road are empty, why not fill those first? if the Triangle has condos built above the businesses they may be over empty businesses. How do we attract businesses?

PD: developers looking for Mixed Use zoning, it has worked in other towns like Des Plaines, also Mundelein is working on Mixed Use, the project is moving forward; Lake Zurich's plan faltered.

BM: Libertyville did a good job with their downtown district, also Hawthorne Woods. We have a major tourist attraction here in the marina, as well as a train station, our train parking of 105 spots is filled every day.

PD: the Metra plan to expand parking and build an enclosed shelter went out to bid last month, that various pieces of the Station Area & Streetscape Plan are coming together. The Streetscape study will be ready in a month.

BL: Got to have a "whole package" to attract developer investments; they want to see a Signage Code to ensure that surrounding properties don't ruin their investment because of improper signage.

BS: What are our choices? Leave the Triangle as Shopping District zoning? Leave it that way and that's what we'll get: a shopping district. Mixed Use is the way to go.

JL: Triangle development ideas have been around for years, since the development of the marina. Do we want 118 condos? Too much density? 7 years ago we looked at R4 zoning, the PZB did not approve. The wetland area on the south side of 7th has not been developed.

Mayor: We need to protect against "severe" density. The Triangle is where we start; development will then spread down Sheridan Road, and the south side of 7th Street.

BL: the Village owns 5 acres in the Triangle area, a good place to start development.

PD: developers don't want to spend money on engineering studies. Other towns have engineering and zoning in place.

Laura: we have nothing to show developers.

BL: it could take 6 months to get zoning changes through the PZB and Village Board; this is a disincentive to developers.

JL: can we ask them for a PUD?

BL: better to have zoning in place. The Central Business District zoning gives the flexibility of a PUD, but gives the village more control over the developer.

PD: I need to be able to market the area, the total concept, the land use, need Requests for Proposals to give to developers.

BM: Why don't we go ahead with the zoning changes, but at a lower level of density, perhaps 90 condo units? Then we have a plan in place that we can bait developers with; if they want changes they will have to negotiate.

JL: put Mixed Use zoning in place, but at less density.

BL: suggested that the PZB take another look at Central Business District Zoning, copies will be passed out to each member, get back with comments and suggestions. The PZB needs to approve zoning changes first, and then it goes to the Village Board, need public hearings.

PD: a time line for TIF has begun. The TIF district plan was made public on July 2, 2007, letters have been distributed to property owners directly involved, as well as those nearby, plan to have ready and present to the Village Board in the fall.

Residents of South Park:

Various questions re the development and marketing of the Triangle, getting Metra to expand service to Winthrop Harbor, how the slow rate of development and delays is hurting their property value, restricting their ability and desire to keep their places up, can't find buyers so are stuck in their homes until the whole process goes further down the line. The Mayor assured them that the village doesn't want to hurt any citizen, that at the last meeting a majority of homeowners were in favor of the plan, that he expects they will be OK in the long run.

TN: disappointed that other Village Board members did not attend, wants to move ahead with development, stick to the time line, keep homeowners involved and informed.

BS: re status of the Signage ordinance. BL reported that the PZB approved it, but the Village Board did not, it is presently tabled, PD is reviewing it.

JH: suggested that the EDC put together the major points in the Plans and present it to the PZB and the Village Board, to facilitate their review and approval.

KM: also need guidelines on landscaping, so that developers don't blacktop all the way to the street.

PD: need some flexibility to attract developers. Development is a complicated process, need approvals from three boards, takes time.

PD: thanked the PZB and the Village Board for attending and listening.

JL: seems like we should go ahead with this project.

BL: will distribute the Central Business District Zoning proposal to the PZB tomorrow, get written comments back to him; he will also give copies to the property owners in the Triangle area. Would like to get this on the August PZB agenda, then get the Board to approve, hold public hearings, that all of this may take until October to complete. Will relook at the Signage ordinance, but the CBD zoning takes priority.

Meeting adjourned: 8:45 P.M.