

VILLAGE OF SHOREWOOD

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

18 March 2009

Chairman Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Present: Chairman Gary Fitzgerald, Vice Chair Dan Gron, Steve Brockman, Duane Gronwold, Pete Cerve, Jeff Nagel, Jim Schlunz and Debbie Olson.

Absent: Melissa Bradford and James Relyea.

Also present were Nancy Roman, Economic Development Director and Karen James, Planner.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

MINUTES

Duane Gronwold made a motion to approve the minutes from the 4 March 2009 meeting, seconded by Jim Schlunz. All in favor, none opposed, minutes approved.

PLANNING & ZONING

1. Consideration of Concept Plan for Troy Fire Department, Station 1.

Gary Fitzgerald introduced the Concept Plan and asked Nancy Roman to take the floor. A picture of the fire station was shown on the screen. The new fire station is to be located at School Road and Route 59. The Department purchased the land several years ago and Staff became involved several months ago. Ms. Roman turned the floor over to representatives from the Fire District. Roger Barrowman took the floor. Mr. Barrowman introduced Mike Farrell the civil engineer, Greg Lyons, the architect and Bob Schwartz, the Fire Chief.

Ms. Roman asked Mr. Barrowman about the relocation from the current site and how the new site works better. Mr. Barrowman answered that most of the calls are ambulance calls and the majority of those calls are at I-55 and 80. It makes it easier for getting on the interstate This location also creates equal distances between Stations 1 and 2 and future station 3.

Duane Gronwold asked about problems there may be getting out of the station when school lets out. Mr. Barrowman answered that School Road will become three lanes which will give two lanes to by-pass the traffic.

Mr. Schwartz also answered that at the most congested times when the busses are leaving it only takes 8 minutes for the busses to clear. Mr. Barrowman added that Shorewood Police Department is also there to help direct traffic when school lets out. Gary Fitzgerald commented that the long term goal is to have a traffic light at the intersection of Route 59 and School Road.

Dan Gron inquired as to why the design was different than originally planned, like Station 2. Mr. Barrowman answered the new design allows for office space. Mr. Gron felt the first plans were better and that now there was so much roof line. Chief Schwartz answered that this is a lot larger station and that the new plans include 4 bays as opposed to 3 bays, plus all the offices.

There was further discussion on the roof line and the look of the station. Chief Schwartz advised the commission to take a look at the fire station at Route 6 and Ashton in Morris, it is the same design and looks very nice.

Mr. Farrell commented that being a four sided design, they tried to make it pleasing from every side. There will be up/down sconce lights all around the building.

Mr. Fitzgerald called for questions and comments. He noted that this is a concept plan and the task is for the Fire District to take comments to prepare for final plans.

Debbie Olson commented that landscaping will be key because this is a gateway to the Village and could use improving.

Mr. Fitzgerald is looking forward to seeing the Fire District back for Final Site Plan.

2. Towne Center Neo-Traditional Homes

a) Public Hearing

b) Petition #09-288

Consideration of an amendment to a conditional use permit for a Planned Unit Development to allow for reducing the square footage of the Neo-Traditional product.

Chairman Fitzgerald introduced the Public Hearing and informed the Commission of information provided in the packets. A final set of copies of the power point presentation was handed out.

Mr. Fitzgerald opened the public hearing and asked Nancy Roman for comments. Ms Roman commented that it was suggested to Michael Lerner with MCZ to work with Chuck Smith and Arete 3 on the Towne Center Neo-Traditional product.

Chuck Smith took the floor and introduced John Green and Michael Lerner of MCZ Development and Jen Patton of Arete 3.

Mr. Smith began the presentation by explaining the studies on what the market would be and how it would allow for the Neo-Traditional product. What Arete 3 has done over the last several months in working with MCZ has begun to formulate a product type. The ranch home will come down to 1400 square feet and a second story to come down to 1700 square feet. The ordinance now says 1700 on the ranch but 2400 on the two story.

Mr. Smith passed out a two page article that was published on smaller homes. He referred to what Channahon has done in redefining the market.

Mr. Smith showed a slide of a streetscape in Brookfield, Illinois built between 1929 and 1933. The lots in the photos are 25 feet and the homes are about 22 feet wide with the homes being about 1300 to 1500 sq ft.

He then showed a slide of a new development in Colorado with Neo-Traditional neighborhoods. The lots are 35-40 feet wide with homes being about 27 feet. The homes are 1700 to 2000 square feet. Access to the rear of the homes is through the alley. The homes sit about 10 feet apart. The diversity of the neighborhood includes entry level, singles, empty nesters and small families.

Mr. Smith discussed the contrast between the Brookfield and the Colorado neighborhoods.

Mr. Smith continued by saying based on their research they found what they have dubbed an emerging market, these are first time home buyers between the ages 25 and 35 years old just getting started raising families. They are coming from rental properties and are looking to buy. After that group will be the baby boomers as the market begins to improve they will be looking to downsize.

Mr. Smith then showed slides of a few different types of homes. One was a ranch house, a cape cod bungalow, 1400 to 1500 sq ft. The next product was a two story component about 1700 square feet going up to about 2000. They are also looking to develop a larger component that would have a first floor master with a couple bedrooms upstairs. This model would have empty nesters in mind for when the children come home to visit. They tried to keep the main entrance close to the ground, making access easier.

Next was a slide showing two options for garages, one attached and one detached. They allow for guest parking off the alley. There would be a 10 foot separation between the homes. They would also put in landscaping to help separate the houses.

Mr. Smith then showed what a street would look like with several different elevations. The lots would be 37 feet wide with a 27 foot wide house. If the houses are set too far apart it hurts the character of the neighborhood.

The illustrations shown have more mature landscaping to make the neighborhood look more mature. They also have Shorewood traditional lighting and show how the first model and lot looking from the bridge would appear.

Mr. Smith noted they would like to get a model up as soon as possible in time for the Spring housing market. If the petition is approved they'd like to get the plans approved for the model. He talked further about the model he would like to premier.

Gary Fitzgerald inquired if this is a key lot. Ms. Roman answered that it was.

Mr. Smith continued by saying they would build the model on the 50 foot lot just to get the model up and going. He went on to say that banks are going to be tightening the amounts of mortgages and asking for more money down on homes, so the homes need to be affordable. He also discussed energy efficiency in these homes and LEEDS.

He then showed a slide of the site plan, showing the original plan with about 30 lots. Now there may be an opportunity for more.

At a minimum they are seeking approval to redevelop the lot sizes on Phase 1 and then move forward with Phase 2. If successful in the market a Phase 3 would be added. Phase 1 was originally 30 lots and will now be 40. Phases 1 and 2 would bring the total lots on those blocks from 46 to 59 lots, picking up about 20 lots total.

The hope is to have discussion on the reduction of the square footage of the house size and have a recommendation to the board, then continue at a later meeting to talk about the reduction of the lot size.

Dan Gron mentioned that he personally would like to downsize but he wants quality. He is looking for quality product and believes that people are willing to downsize to have good quality.

Nancy Roman recommend a book called "the not so big house". She felt this book was beneficial in helping people understand smaller size houses.

There was discussion regarding the value based on the community and not the architecture that is in the community.

Gary Fitzgerald inquired as to the price point. Mr. Smith answered \$200,000 to \$250,000.

Commissioner Olson commented that the research is spot on. The IA of R is dedicating a whole component to this age group of buyers. They are not demanding space, but rather they are demanding quality. This new personality is driving the market. Mr. Smith agreed stating that this age group has very specific value structures and they will not compromise.

There was further discussion on the market and what the demands are.

Kurt Carroll spoke stating that the underlying zoning for this area was originally 1200 square feet but as the zoning went through it was dictated to be 2400 square feet in the PUD.

Mr. Smith also mentioned that all the homes have basements.

The discussion continued with the types of people that would buy these homes.

Commissioner Cerve noted that we were now designing to meet the needs of today. The market has shifted significantly but he is struggling with the size of the home. He fears that 10 years from now it won't be what the market demands.

Ms. Roman paralleled this development to Devonshire in Kipling and what a success that has been.

Kurt Carroll said that the 2400 square feet was a mistake, he felt 2400 square feet for a Neo-Traditional home was too large.

Mr. Fitzgerald wondered how many notices went to surrounding homeowners. Ms. Roman answered three because there were only three homes within the 150 feet. There are 10 or 12 homes sold and occupied in the whole subdivision. There was further discussion on public notification.

Chairman Fitzgerald called for comments or questions from the commission

Commissioner Gronwold commented that the young buyers are looking for the whistles and bells. He feels by the time you add in the whistles and bells the homes will end up being more than \$300,000. Mr. Gronwold feels that Mr. Smith is lowballing the price of the house. Mr. Smith answered they are looking to price the homes at a figure banks will approve.

Mr. Gronwold continued by saying it was hard enough to accept the 50 foot lots, let alone 37 feet. The number of variances for 80 foot lots has been tremendous. He is afraid it will open the floodgates of builders wanting to subdivide lots into smaller parcels. Mr. Smith answered that there is protection with the PUD, a community that is specific. The Neo-Traditional product is an entity of its own.

Commissioner Brockman stated he is extremely concerned and disappointed with this product. Five years ago he went to look at the Neo-Traditional site in Frankfort. Those were 2400 square foot homes that were beautiful. We already have Devonshire and Shorewood Glen with 1600 to 1700 foot homes that are not selling. He finished by saying he is not ready to sell out Shorewood.

Mr. Smith answered that Baby Boomers and Generation Y buyers are looking for this type of product. The Towne Center type developments attract a different type of buyer. It will attract Urban buyers who are looking for a more dense environment. This product gives more diversification. Mr. Smith finished by saying there is a large amount of research showing this type of community is desirable and successful.

Commissioner Schlunz asked how locked in is the 1400 – 1700 square foot house size and why it couldn't be more like 1600 square feet for the smaller home. Mr. Smith answered that that size would put us out of the market.

There was further discussion on what it will look like to have 37 foot lots with 27 foot houses.

Chairman Fitzgerald called for Public comments.

Michael Kaminsky of 1717 Spencer Court took the floor. His home is just on the other side of the Distinctive Homes models. He has a lot of concerns, but his main concern is having reduced square footage. He doesn't expect a Neo-Traditional home to be 2400 square feet but he does feel that 1500 square feet is very small. He has a problem with the smaller size of the house and the lot. He is worried about the tax base and also what it might do to the value of his home. He would like to see some diversity in the plan, perhaps varying the house sizes and lot sizes. He thinks if they were kept a little bigger it would achieve what the Village originally wanted. He worries about himself but also about the neighborhood as a whole.

Kimberly Shemash of 1716 Spencer Court took the floor. She commented that if the Generation Y wants bells and whistles they will not be able to afford these houses since the base price is \$200,000 with no extras. She felt Mr. Smith was sending a mixed message.

Mr. Smith tried to clarify what the level of amenities would be included in the base model. He said that those buyers are willing to make a concession on space in order to afford the bells and whistles.

Bob Schwartz felt the Neo-Traditional neighborhood looks like the streets of Chicago and that it shouldn't be at the focal point of Towne Center. He thought it should be put toward the back of the subdivision.

Mayor Chapman spoke next. He commented that he grew up in a neighborhood just like the one Mr. Smith is proposing. He liked the way there was a sense of community in this type of neighborhood. He grew up sitting on porches out in front and talking to one another. He noted that it's another choice in Shorewood. You can go to Edgewater or Lake Forrest if you want big, this is just another choice. This is a small phase of the Towne Center. The people that choose to live there are going to choose it because it is the lifestyle they want.

Trustee Lea Stahr noted that he grew up in several south side neighbors that had only 3 feet between the houses. He felt he didn't suffer for that, it was a good way to grow up.

Trustee Jim McDonald mentioned he was against the lot size in the original phase based on what constituents were telling him they wanted or didn't want. He touched on the retired people market, people that would like to downsize. He is still not sold on the 37 foot lot. He is willing to make some concessions, but is not sure he could agree to 37 feet. He also touched on fire code. He felt that with these homes being so close it would be hard to keep fire from spreading from house to house.

Jim Lynch lives in Del Webb. He agrees that lots should be larger than 37 square feet. His house is 1550 square feet and the houses on either side are larger than his. There is some variation in lot size at Del Webb and he thinks there should be a mixture of lot sizes in the Neo-Traditional neighborhood. He is concerned there would not be buyers. Mr. Smith answered that he feels comfortable that this is a market that can be responded to.

Mr. Carroll talked about the homes in Frankfort and how beautiful they were but those did not even occupy a whole block, at the end of the block it turns into townhomes. They didn't have the velocity to build more. Builders are coming in asking to be able to downsize their houses. They can't sell the large houses. This is the first of the developers to come forward with this,

but we are going to see more. Kimball Hill inquired about having a model that could go under the minimums.

Mr. Smith added that in the last several months 3 or 4 developers have asked Arete 3 to redefine their product before they go under. They are working hard to bring down the lot and house sizes.

Mr. Fitzgerald commented that we are getting a little more comfortable with the smaller lot size and that construction quality really matters. He then asked for further comments.

Trustee Celine Schwartz felt 40 foot wide lots would be a compromise.

Duane Gronwold then made a motion to enter the findings of fact that the conditions in Section 10-11-7 and 10-12-4 (B) have been met and recommend approval to the Village Board of Petition #09-288 seconded by Jeff Nagel. Roll call vote, four (4) in favor, two (2) opposed, Petition approved.

3. Consideration of Concept Plan for Towne Center Neo Traditional neighborhood changes.

Chairman Fitzgerald would like to see this come back before the Commission. He would like to see how Phase 1 and 2 go first before allowing a Phase 3.

Mr. Smith answered they are seeking final approval for Phase 1 and 2 and preliminary approval for Phase 3.

Kurt Carroll wondered if there are some things that are more acceptable to the Commission than others in this concept. Something that gets this moving and makes it easier to sell more houses. The elements that would make this plan more palatable.

Duane Gronwold answered that he thought 50 foot lots were too small and that he can't see even 40 foot lots.

Kurt Carroll replied that Neo-Traditional is the continuity of the houses on the street. This is what we are looking for.

Mr. Gronwold asked what was the purpose of 37 feet as opposed to 50 feet. Mr. Smith replied that this product was designed to address the market. We've changed the architecture of the houses several times to create a product that we feel will meet the market place. You defeat the concept and the benefit of the Neo-Traditional environment if the lots are too big. The house product size stuck on a 50 foot lot does not create the Neo-Traditional neighborhood.

There was discussion on making sure that there was enough difference in the houses so that when you look down the street it's appealing.

Chairman Fitzgerald called for further comments.

Jim Schlunz liked the idea of varying lot widths.

There was further discussion on the phases.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked why approve two phases, why not just start with one. Ms. Roman replied, it was investment related. It gives the ability to continue if the project is going well without having to come back for further approvals.

OTHER

Ms. Roman mentioned the next agenda will have the FCA site plan, a Variance for a fence and follow up for the fire department.

ADJOURNMENT

Duane Gronwold made a motion to adjourn at 9:25 p.m., seconded by Steve Brockman. All in favor, none opposed, meeting adjourned.

Next meeting April 1, 2009.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Sharp
Recording Secretary