

VILLAGE OF PRAIRIE GROVE
Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes

Jan 12, 2009 at 7:30 AM

Call to Order: Economic Development Chairman, Keith McConnell, called this meeting to order at 7:40 AM.

Roll Call: Present were EDC members Bob Gray, Sean Rathjen, Chairman Keith McConnell and Village Administrator, Jeannine Smith. Member Rene Zamudio absent.

Public Comment: none.

Approve Dec 8, 2008 Minutes: Approved by unanimous vote.

Old Business:

a. What kind of businesses does EDC recommend at various locations?

- Rt. 176 Corridor Plan & River walk Vision Review
 - Background:
 - i. Chairman McConnell summarized the purpose and objectives of creating the Rt. 176 corridor plan and Riverfront vision: If a developer were to approach the village and want to annex into the village, we will be prepared as to what type of development is appropriate to the community.
 - ii. Ms Smith summarized the process to date. Several community outreach workshops have been held including representatives from Burtons Bridge and feedback from the community was considered by the Villages Consultants, Houseal and Lavigne, in preparing the draft plan.
 - iii. Mr. Gray emphasized that there was a major public meeting at Prairie Isle that was well attended and that these plans are based on and an expansion of the comprehensive plan that was approved several years ago.
 - Financial Impacts:
 - i. Mr. Rathjen noted that this study did not address the economic impact. How are we going to estimate the amount of revenue provided? How much parks will cost to operate? What is the net cost to taxpayers? Perhaps Houseal & Lavigne have a model or a framework from other communities?
 - ii. Devin Lavigne joined the discussion by phone. Mr. Lavigne said the net financial impact on the village and taxpayers is beyond the scope of the project, but that based on his experience it would have to be a positive financial impact consider the amount of additional commercial and relatively little open space along Rt. 176. Also for the Riverfront vision, the additional commercial would more than pay for the parks and recreation costs. It would have to be a net positive to the taxpayers.
 - iii. Chairman McConnell said that he expects that all infrastructure improvements would be funded by developers or the state.
 - Burtons Bridge:
 - i. Mr. Rathjen asked why the riverfront vision was being handled separately from the Rt. 176 corridor. Ms. Smith stated it was in response to concerns about the riverfront by Burtons Bridge. Mr. Lavigne said they heard a lot of fear from residents that they we would be kicking people out of their homes. These concerns are based on not understanding the purpose of having a vision like this. This vision is not a recommendation to convert the area to commercial. Rather, it is a document to be used if the opportunity presents itself. It will not create the opportunity.
 - ii. Chairman McConnell stated that it is common practice for municipalities to plan like this and to do so 1.5 miles beyond their borders. He thought he recalled that Island Lake already has such a plan that included the Burtons Bridge area.
 - iii. Burtons Bridge resident Michelle Yantis confirmed that Burtons Bridge is within the planning area of other villages too. Island Lake also has a plan.
 - iv. Chairman McConnell reiterated Mr. Levine's comment: The plan "won't create the opportunity". Rather, if a developer comes to the village and wants to annex, we will be prepared to respond.

- v. Chairman McConnell stated that the number one most important thing to him is the protection of current residents. The key word is 'if'. If a developer and burtons bridge residents want to go commercial, this plan is a good way to go about it. We do need to make sure that this is clear when communicating with the public and in the documentation so that the people sitting in our chairs 10 years from now understand that this is the intent.
- vi. Mr. Rathjen stated that he is on the school board, that schools have the biggest impact on taxpayers and that Burtons Bridge and Prairie Grove are in the same school district. Having more businesses in the area would reduce the tax burden on property tax for all residents in the district.
- Nish Road:
 - i. Mr. Rathjen asked if the Riverfront vision would need to become a plan in order to address the Nish intersection. Mr. Lavigne stated that they obtained expertise of Gary Overbey in completing the Rt. 176 plan. This intersection is so poorly configured that to make it worthwhile to improve would require significant capital expense including two homes being acquired on Riverside Drive.
 - ii. Chairman McConnell asked if there was any way to improve the intersection without such a big impact on residents in Burtons Bridge. Mr. Lavigne suggested another alternative could be to extend the road through what is currently the parking lot of the Mexican food restaurant.
- Public Comment:
 - i. Ms. Yantis stated that the biggest fear is that this plan will give authority for an annexation strategy – incentives like Prairie Grove has done along Rt. 31. Opening the door to change the area. "We like it how it is". If Prairie Grove annexes us, it will only change who we pay taxes to.
 - ii. One gentleman said his concern is that if tries to sell his house, will he take a hit on the price he can get because of having this plan would lower the value of his home.
 - iii. Ms. Yantis stated "We don't want commercial. Our neighbors are opposed to that. It's the polar opposite of what we want."
 - iv. Rt. 176 widening won't happen for 15 years. How do we protect our investments in the next 15 years? We don't want to change the character of the area.
 - v. Biggest concern is protection of the water supply. And fees charged when if forced to hook up to water & sewer. Impacts on the water table- how much land will be taken up on either side of Rt. 176 if add sidewalk- going too deep.
 - vi. Increase in cut through traffic from Wright Road to the river walk is also a concern.
- Chairman McConnell's Questions to Mr. Lavigne:
 - i. Residential to Commercial Conversion? Mr. Lavigne explained that we should expect that people who live in these areas would likely no longer want to live there once Rt. 176 is widened to 4-6 lanes. Chairman McConnell asked if we could add a zoning designation for this area. Mr. Lavigne said they could add that and that the type of business would likely be a neighborhood service such as an accounting office. Chairman McConnell asked if there was some way to make the land use designation more specific here to indicate quiet less impactful businesses are what would be more appropriate since this is adjacent to residential area.
 - ii. Areas I & J including Pease property: Chairman McConnell noted the plan calls for the Pease property to be office, but that the land use designation was broader than that and asked if that could be changed to something more specific in order to better protect the adjacent residents. Mr. Lavigne underscored that the need to be sensitive to residents is an important part of the plan. He suggested that we could put in language requiring these locations be developed as a PUD. Ms. Smith commented that she would like to see all the areas done as a PUD. Chairman McConnell asked if there could be any changes made to the language of the land use designation or zoning classification that would better protect the residents.
 - iii. Chairman McConnell stated that he had more questions and asked if he could submit them to Mr. Lavigne by email. Mr. Lavigne agreed

Next Meeting: TBD

Adjournment: Motion by Mr. Rathjen, 2nd by Mr. Gray to adjourn at 9:10am . On a roll call vote all members voted aye. Motion carries.