

DRAFT MINUTES
REGULAR PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
November 4, 2021

Call to Order and Roll Call

After asking all meeting participants to wear masks in accordance with Covid-19 pandemic requirements, Chairperson Tim Loftus called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Chairperson Loftus and Plan Commissioners, Lloyd Berry, Angela Fanella, Mohammed Saeed and Jamie Vondruska were present; and Commissioners Laura Brown, Matt Halkyard and Peter Cooper absent. Chairperson Loftus explained the Plan Commission's advisory role and function, and reviewed the public hearing procedures including public comment protocol, and said proceedings would be recorded. He introduced Village Board Trustee Liaison Steve Thompson, Planning Manager Kelly Purvis, Associate Planner Taylor Gendel, Senior Civil Engineer Amy McKenna and Recording Secretary Barb Dutton.

Public Comment Non-Agenda Items

There was no public comment pertaining to non-agenda items.

Approval of Plan Commission Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Fanella moved to approve the draft minutes of the October 7, 2021 Plan Commission meeting; seconded by Commissioner Berry, the motion passed by voice vote.

Commissioner Fanella moved to approve the draft minutes of the October 14, 2021 Plan Commission meeting; seconded by Commissioner Berry, the motion passed by voice vote.

Public Hearing – 982-992 Hill Avenue – Patrick J. Murphy Major Subdivision request

A motion by Commissioner Fanella and seconded by Commissioner Vondruska to open the Public Hearing passed by voice vote.

Staff Introduction

Sworn in, Planning Manager Kelly Purvis, 535 Duane St., Glen Ellyn, stated that the Petitioner, Patrick J. Murphy of GE Hill Avenue Properties LLC, is the owner of the subject property. Mr. Murphy had proposed to the Plan Commission an eight-lot subdivision in March 2020, she continued, but is now proposing a seven-lot subdivision, reducing by three the number of variations previously sought. The Commission, related Planning Manager Purvis, is to consider Preliminary and Final Plats of Subdivision, and to allow lots within the subdivision to not meet the requirements of the R2 Zoning District. The Petitioner, she said, is looking to have a corner lot to not meet the minimum corner lot width, and sidewalks to be installed along the north side of Hill Avenue only. Additionally, she summarized, the Petitioner is requesting six variations from the Zoning Code to allow Lots 1-4 to have rear yard setback variations; Lot 7 to have corner side yard setback and lot width variations. She said the Petitioner is a lot coverage ratio (LCR) of 23 percent for all the lots in lieu of the 20 percent permitted.

The subject property, stated Planning Manager Purvis, is located on the north side of Hill Avenue between Cumnor and Golf, just northwest of Glen Oak Country Club, and is surrounded by land zoned for single-family residential, conservation-parking, and conservation-recreation uses. The wooded site, which has a 23-ft. drop in grade, is currently vacant, she said. Because a peak in Hill Avenue makes for site-line issues, redevelopment calls for lowering the profile of the street, she explained, adding that a review of the site-line analysis submitted by the developer has indicated that the proposed plan would be acceptable. The proposed subdivision complies with minimum lot area requirements, she said, however the developer is seeking approval of variations to allow Lot 1 to have a lot depth of 108.79 feet in lieu of the 110 feet required; Lot 7 to have a lot width of 72.3 feet in lieu of the 80 feet that is required; Lots 1-3 to have a rear yard setback of 30 feet in lieu of the 40 feet that is required; Lot 4 to have a rear yard setback of 35 feet in lieu of the 40 feet that is required; Lot 7 to have a corner side yard setback of 20 feet in lieu of the 30 feet that is required; and Lots 1-7 to have a maximum lot coverage ratio (LCR) of 23 percent.

In reviewing public improvements, Planning Manager Purvis stated that sidewalks would be installed on the east side of Cumnor, the north side of Hill and on and the west side of Golf. A variation from Code is needed for to not install sidewalk on the south side of Hill, she continued, stating that Staff is in support of this. Parkway trees would be planted and street lights installed, she added. The Subdivision, stated Ms. Purvis, would be served by Village water and sanitary sewer (noting that the sewer main would need to be extended from Cumnor Avenue to Lot 7 to serve the development). A storm-water detention basin is proposed, she said, explaining that a homeowners association would be established to maintain it. Utility wires will be placed underground, and portions of Golf and Cumnor reconstructed with asphalt curb and gutter (Hill will have concrete curb and gutter) she said. The demolition plan submitted, she noted, specifies all trees on the site to be removed. Ms. Purvis concluded her presentation by saying that Staff recommends two conditions for approval.

Chairperson Loftus asked if the original, six-lot annexation agreement has to go before the Village Board approval to be modified for seven lots, to which Ms. Purvis replied affirmatively. The Chair then wondered whether, if the Board didn't approve this, the project would not go through if the Plan Commission approves the seven-lot plan. Ms. Purvis said this is correct. Chairperson Loftus asked if there are any storm water easements on individual lots. Sworn in, Amy McKenna, project manager, Hampton, Lenzini and Renwick, 380 Shepard Drive, Elgin, Ill., said that there are storm water easements along the lot that has the retention basin, and that swales run through the rear yards and side property lines. Chairperson Loftus asked if the plan would restrict homeowner improvement plans. Ms. McKenna said that construction is generally not allowed on a storm water easement, and that homeowners wouldn't be allowed to build on the back 15 feet of the property.

Commissioner Vondruska asked who is to pay for lowering the profile of Hill Avenue. Planning Manager Purvis stated that the cost would be shared between the Village and the developer, as outlined in the 2006 annexation agreement. Commissioner Vondruska asked how the change would affect Glen Oak Country Club, to which Ms. McKenna replied that the profile of the road will have a crown, and curb and cutter, with drainage intercepted by the curb and not flowing over.

Chairperson Loftus asked if there are any pictures of the homes proposed. Planning Manager Purvis said that while the homes are being called 1 ½ story, for Village purposes (i.e., LCR) they are considered two-story. The homes are to be custom-built, she indicated, so buyers will decide floor plans and style. Commissioner Fanella asked for confirmation that all lots comply with the minimum area required by Code, to which Planning Manager Purvis responded affirmatively.

Petitioner's Presentation

Representing the applicant, Jon Green, Engineering Resource Associates, 35701 West Avenue, Warrenville, Ill., was sworn in. Mr. Green, a civil engineer, stated that Petitioner Patrick J. Murphy has owned the subject property since approximately 2014, and at the time of the conceptual review hearing, had shared with neighbors the vision for the property. Mr. Green explained that, unlike the eight-lot concept earlier deliberated, the current, seven-lot plan presents an LCR of 23 percent with no deviations/variations on lot size. He identified road characteristics, topographic relief and lot geometry challenges. Because the site is only about 105 feet deep at its westerly side, he said, the lot areas have been "spread out" to make them comparable/compatible from a house size standpoint. He stated that a hardship is requested due to the property's "triple frontage" necessitating improvements not only to Hill Avenue, but to Golf and Cumnor.

Mr. Green stated that market research points to a demand for first-floor master bedrooms – a "luxury," he contended, not afforded by a traditional "in-town" lot. He said the proposed project "kind of completes this stretch of Hill Avenue," and stated that it would provide full, safe access for pedestrians, and bring all of the perimeter streets to the current Village standards. He added that the landscaped detention pond would provide a natural cleansing system and that its associated open space would be an amenity. Mr. Green asserted that the project would offer tax benefits to the School and Park Districts and to the Village, appeal to "empty nesters" looking to downsize, and be "a top-notch product."

Commissioner Questions

Chairperson Loftus asked why, if the homes are to be custom built and design requirements aren't known in advance, the site needs to be clear cut. Mr. Green responded that (while sample footprints are outlined) the builder will have to over-dig to accommodate driveways and utilities and manipulate grades for safety/drainage. He offered the assurance that each house will have a "nice landscaping package" and street trees that meet arborist specs will be plant. Chairperson Loftus observed that, regardless, the plan represents a net loss of 109 trees, to which Mr. Green noted that the tree preservation ordinance doesn't penalize for reasonable development, and execution will fully comply with arborist requirements. Mr. Loftus suggested some creativity might be applied to save trees. Mr. Green contended that with the present density of the site trees compete for sunlight and oxygen.

Commissioner Saeed asked whether, with a 23-ft. drop in elevation, development would entail a cut-and-fill approach. Mr. Green explained that most driveways would be on the high side of lots and that dwellings could have lower window wells, and said that the slope is only happening within the side yards. He stated that each house will step down 2 or 3 feet, and that terrain will be flat between them for safe drainage. Commissioner Saeed asked if roof level would be down. Mr. Green stated that they would comply with the maximum permitted by Code. Commissioner Saeed asked if the retention pond

retain water all year round. Mr. Green replied that only 6 or 8 inches of water in the water would be in the basin all year, and will contain plants that promote drainage. During “flood stage,” he explained, the basin is expected to fill to the top for only one to three days until it drains naturally. Commissioner Saeed asked if a fence will be installed around the basin. Mr. Green said, no, because the plan meets county safety requirements, and suggested that the pond area would appear “park like” with a “gentle, rolling slope.” Commissioner Fanella asked why in 2020 the subdivision concept did not feature an out lot. Mr. Green stated that the vision planned to address development differently, and was to include individual, underground dry wells that would retain water on each lot. The Commissioner asked the reason for the change. Mr. Green said the altered design stemmed from working with the Village’s senior engineer, and the real estate allows this solution.

Observing that the builder’s website features homes that are larger in size, Commissioner Berry asked if the design features of the subject property would resemble these. Mr. Green responded that the larger homes are generally on 150-ft.-wide lots, so the dwellings for the proposed subdivision might reflect the French Provincial style, presenting a steeper roofline profile while conforming to the LCR restrictions.

Patrick J. Murphy, 1N712 Bob-O-Link Drive, Winfield, Ill., was sworn in. He stated that the proposed homes will be custom-built and that each lot will have an architect and the layout will not be “cookie cutter.” As to the out lot, he explained that subdivision configuration change came in at the “11th hour,” reducing the homes from eight to seven lots, so a detention pond was required. Accommodating this addition “squeezed” the lots down some, hence, the reason for the variation request. Chairperson Loftus asked if the unit at the Golf end would have a Golf or Hill address, to which Mr. Murphy responded that he expects that all the houses will have a Hill Avenue address.

Expressing that she was comfortable with the LCR, Commissioner Fanella asked if the Petitioner was comfortable foregoing front porches attached garages. Mr. Green stated that the flexibility of having open air porches would be an amenity for the streetscape. Mr. Murphy said he thinks detached garages “doesn’t work right” with the grade, and that “viewing the golf course is a must.” And, although he is unsure yet of homeowner preferences, he values the flexibility a porch option offers.

Chairperson Loftus asked why, when in March 2020 the Petitioner was going to come in with a six-lot subdivision, the concept was changed to eight, then seven. Mr. Green cited economics, giving as an example the need to reconstruct Hill Avenue, and saying that the costs of construction have changed. Mr. Murphy related that the Petitioner started with six, priced it out, wanted to go to eight, and then reduced to seven with the detention pond. He stated that the cost to develop six “just doesn’t work.”

According to Planning Manager Purvis, who listed bonuses outlined, the front porch bonus affords a 22 percent LCR and a garage bonus allows for an additional 2 percent, by right. Remarking that detached garages are infeasible for the configuration proposed, Commissioner Vondruska said he thinks that idea is “kind of off the table.” Mr. Green replied that the Petitioner would be shooting themselves in the foot by removing the porch bonus, saying that the site, with its proximity to the golf course, is “the right location to have porches.” Ms. Purvis clarified that the additional 2 percent of bonus brings the LCR total to 25 percent, and suggested that restricting the ability to build detached garages on the property could be a condition of approval.

Public Comment

Planning Manager Purvis read into the record the following:

Pete Ladesic, 615 Scott Ave., Glen Ellyn: *"Dear Plan Commission members. As a long time resident and property developer in the community I can say that we sorely need some developments like the one being proposed this evening. Over the years I have met many residents who would like to stay in Glen Ellyn and live in a smaller single family ranch style homes on more compact lots and this development would meet that need. Many of the variations requested would not be necessary if we had a separate zoning class for these more compact types of developments. Prior Village Boards had discussed such a need for these types of developments but for many reasons it was never executed. Thank you for taking a moment to read this and for your service to our village Sincerely, Pete Ladesic."*

Sworn in, Terry Lind, 21W451 Fairway, asked if the Petitioner intends to install a fence. After Petitioner Murphy replied, "No," she asked who she needs to talk to about getting Golf Avenue redone. Planning Manager Purvis explained the piece of roadway of concern is unincorporated, so not under Village jurisdiction (but rather County or Township). Chairperson Loftus wondered what interaction between would be required for inter-jurisdiction action. Ms. Purvis was unsure. Ms. Lind recalls an intergovernmental agreement being put in place. Community Development Director Staci Springer, 535 Duane, was sworn in. She explained that when a portion of the Country Club was annexed, the Village took in an adjacent right of way: the east side of Golf Avenue, and that such a segment is not probably not programmed into the Village's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), so encouraged the commenter to reach out to the Village Engineer to see about getting into a future CIP. Ms. Springer said the Village assesses usage in determining priorities.

Sworn in, Mark Susmark, 21W478 Fairway, stated that he has lived in the neighborhood for 41 years, and during that time has been encroached on. He described the wooded neighborhood was a "quiet conservation area," and expressing concern for wild life in the area, said he doesn't want to see "critters chased out." He added that he can't see the benefit to the Village of taking a small piece of property, fearing the hamlet is being turned into "just another subdivision with crammed-in homes." He stated that the Country Club serves as a needed flood plan. He wondered if for seven homes the community is giving up green space and privacy. "What's the benefit?" he asked.

Sworn in, Terran Salbego, 21W471 Fairway Ave., expressed concern about clear cutting the subject site without homes ready for purchase, and inquired about the schedule for these activities. He also wondered if adjustments would need to be made to his property, on which a shed had been built, to accommodate drainage.

Sworn in, Dennis Hogan, 459 Longfellow Ave., Glen Ellyn, said he is looking forward to the proposed development, calling it a "great concept." Saying that the property could have become a parking lot or a development of tract homes, he pronounced the vision presented as "good for Glen Ellyn." He stated that he is a member of Glen Oak Country Club, and that the members love the idea presented.

In response to Chairperson Loftus asking about any impact on the aforementioned shed (on unincorporated property), Planning Manager Purvis stated that relative to this project, the Village

wouldn't require any improvements on anyone else's property. With regard to the drainage pattern, Amy McKenna stated there would be no intention to impact that shed.

Concerning the timing of development activities, Mr. Murphy said he would have loved to have started the project about a year ago. He stated that upon approval, the Petitioner is "ready to roll," and that he hopes to have the project done in two years. He indicated that the market is hot and reported having buyers.

Mr. Green described a phasing approach for earthwork, which he said is constrained by topography, prompting road work at the outset. Phase I, he said, would be clearing trees in the front half of the lots, prior to the utilities and pond being installed. He expects trees would be left in the backyards since individual home designs will determine landscape plan. Commissioner Fanella pointed out that a developer can't clear cut until a subdivision plan is approved.

Motion to Close the Public Hearing

Commissioner Berry, seconded by Commissioner Saeed, moved to close the Public Hearing. The motion passed by voice vote.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Fanella said she appreciates the reduced-lot plan and the improved LCR, and believes the development will be an improvement to the neighborhood, despite the potential regrettable loss of trees. She acknowledged the hardship associated with the parcel, as well as voiced a desire to prohibit detached garages. Expressing agreement, Commissioner Vondruska said "these types of homes are something people are asking for." He said he is "overall supportive," but would like to see as many trees saved as possible. Recognizing a need for housing, Commissioner Saeed he is in support of the project in spite of the variances requested. Commissioner Berry said that he is "definitely in support" of the project, calling it "a nice opportunity to create new product in the market and finish out that strip." He added that despite the tight lots, he doesn't feel the Commission is making a big exception here, and called the quality of workmanship demonstrated by the developer "outstanding."

Expressing that he is "on the fence" about the proposed project, Chairperson Loftus pointed to the difference in density from that of adjoining neighbors. He said while the proposed is compatible with development on Country Club Lane, it is incompatible with the unincorporated residences in terms of lot size and open space. Though he expressed concern about tree loss, he said he didn't see a lot of other options for developing the subject property. He said he could support the project with reservations, and with the caveat that all building be confined to the LCR as defined without detached garages.

Commissioner Fanella said she didn't even know if detached garages are doable. Ms. McKenna explained that the equation assigning impervious surface renders detached garages infeasible. Commissioner Vondruska expressed admiration for the porch aesthetic.

Commissioner Fanella moved for the following:

After conducting a public hearing and deliberating on the requests of the petitioner, Patrick J. Murphy, for approval of Preliminary and Final Plats of Subdivision, Subdivision Regulations Code Variations and Zoning Code Variations all to allow the development of a 7-lot single-family subdivision known as Glen

Estates Subdivision to be located at 982-992 Hill Avenue in the R-2 Single Family Residential Zoning District, the Plan Commission hereby recommends approval based on the findings of fact in the petitioner's application packet, as discussed or amended at the Plan Commission public hearing on November 4, 2021, which are hereby incorporated into the Motion by reference as though fully set forth herein; a copy of which will be attached to the minutes of this meeting and kept on file as part of the permanent records of the Village. The Plan Commission makes this recommendation of approval with the following conditions:

1. That the project be constructed in substantial conformance with the plans and testimony presented at the Plan Commission public hearing and before the Village Board of Trustees; and
2. That the required impact fees for each home be paid prior to the issuance of a building permit for each home.

Seconded by Commissioner Berry, the motion carried 5-0 by roll call vote: Commissioners Fanella, Berry, Saeed and Vondruska and Chairperson Loftus all voted "yes."

Trustee's Report

Trustee Thompson reported that the Board was in the midst of reviewing budget items, and that he expects the Apex 400 variance to be on Monday night's meeting agenda. The Comprehensive Plan is being reviewed and debated, he continued, and related that the McKee House agreement passed. Outside street dining concluded November 1st, he said, but noted that sidewalk dining is still an option as conditions allow. Mr. Thompson reported that the Halloween parade was held, and that a Veteran's Day remembrance event is to be held at Lake Ellyn.

Chairman's Report

Chairperson Loftus reported that attempts are being made to schedule interviews for an additional Commission member.

Staff Report

Planning Manager Purvis introduced new Associate Planner Taylor Gandel. Ms. Purvis announced that Plan Commissioner training is being offered. She said there would be no additional meetings in November, but that one is scheduled for December to consider a 23-townhome subdivision.

Other Business

None.

Adjournment

Chairperson Loftus adjourned the meeting at 8:48 p.m. following a voice vote on a motion to adjourn by Commissioner Berry, seconded by Commissioner Fanella.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Dutton-Thomas
Recording Secretary