

Village of Riverwoods
Plan Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes March 7, 2024

A meeting of the Village of Riverwoods Plan Commission was held on Wednesday, February 1, 2024 at Village Hall. Chairperson Laurie Breitkopf called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Present:

Laurie Breitkopf, Chairperson
Karl Blalock
Sherry Graditor
Stephen Levin
Mike Marshall
Kathryn Romanelli
Carey Rothbardt

Also Present:

Vivian Hofeld, Deputy Village Clerk
Steve Witt, Director of Community Services
Michael Clayton, Village Trustee
Henry Hollander, Village Trustee

1. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Levin moved to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2024 Plan Commission meeting. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

2. Visitors wishing to address the Plan Commission

There were no visitors wishing to address the Plan Commission.

3. New Business

There was no New Business.

4. Old Business

Continued discussion of sub-area plan amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for the Wolters Kluwer site, to consider possible land uses other than office and research – including use of planned unit developments (PUDs).

Lee Brown with Teska Associates explained the intent is to provide structure that includes the right standards. The “purpose statement” explains the original intent for a PUD as a tool to authorize resident development that is excellent in design even though denser than 1-acre zoning. Communities adopt PUD Ordinances with standards that avoid the challenges in the Zoning Ordinance that diminish the potential to have exceptional design as the developer can meet minimum standards rather than enhancing the character in the area. A PUD Ordinance assures that new development is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, fits the community and enhances the quality of life, respects the environment and its context, strengthens neighborhoods and a sense of community, enhances diversity of residential types and opportunities, protects woodlands and wetlands, integrates necessary parking, accommodates vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic, minimizes demand on limited public resources and services and incorporates natural and built design elements to enhance the Village’s unique character.

The Village needs to focus on sites that would most likely accommodate residential redevelopment. Mr. Witt noted a PUD would have access to the roads going around the Village. Mr. Brown explained PUDs are a special use and the Village could require a minimum size for a PUD. Mr. Brown is working with Village Attorney Bruce Huvard to determine whether this will be a stand-alone district or if it would be an overlay district. There are some standards that would determine the standards where a specific use would be allowed. This could include a commercial use in a residential zone, that would have to meet certain requirements for multi-family homes alongside single-family homes. These could be either permitted uses or Special Uses. Ms. Romanelli asked if rental single-family homes would be a permitted use. Mr. Brown explained rental versus for sale properties are not part of the Zoning process.

Mr. Brown asked the Commission to look at potential Special Uses, with a special list of standards. He questioned whether the scale of a 4-unit multi-family property would be allowed. Mr. Brown noted a mid-rise condo that is three stories would be a Special Use that would have to meet “special” standards. Many communities realize there is a tradeoff to allow a higher structure to have other standards such as affordable housing. Often, a PUD allows buildings to be closer to each other because there are no setbacks. Mr. Rothbardt noted there are some urban developments in Glenview that are very close to each other. He believes those are too close. Mr. Brown noted there are some zero lot line properties that are build right on the lot line. It is difficult to have front and side yard setbacks but buffer areas can be required. Mr. Witt believes the Commission should consider the size of a house.

Mr. Brown believes there is a big difference between open space and usable open space. A separation between buildings is not always usable open space. Open space can be built for a stormwater detention area, but it may not be usable. A dry basin with seating and a walkway can be used and has value.

Mr. Brown defined impervious surface as any surface that does not allow water to pass. Lot coverage is a separate measure and focuses on buildings that cover the ground. Lot

coverage and impervious surface are included in PUDs so municipalities can help regulate storm water flow.

Mr. Brown believes good design provides parking but better design hides the cars. Covering the cars would be preferable wherever possible. Guest parking is necessary, but it also needs to be convenient. Standards must be measurable and address the list of things the commissioners liked; some of which cannot be anticipated during the design. A PUD Ordinance will identify what is desired/not desired and allowed/not allowed in the PUD. The Village can also look at materials that can be maintained.

Public benefits are things that go over and above just producing buildings. If minimum standards are exceeded, a municipality could include a (density) bonus. Mr. Rothbardt noted a development that meets the Village's standards has not come forth. Mr. Brown explained if a development does not meet the Village's minimum standard, it should not be approved. Ch. Breitkopf believes certain improvements, such as sustainability features, could warrant a bonus. Mr. Rothbardt noted the Commission is pre-planning to determine whether a proposal meets the standards. Ms. Graditor questioned whether there should be an Appearance Review Commission. She recommends putting in an appearance review to work with a developer. Mr. Brown believes the Ordinance would be building in an appearance review. Ms. Graditor believes there should be a group of standards that the Village would accept would save a lot of challenges in the future.

Mr. Brown believes there are some standard approaches to make the process successful. This includes a pre-application staff review that works with the developer on what may be acceptable to the Village. The proposal would then go to the Plan Commission for a conceptual review. There can be an optional community workshop after a conceptual review. Staff would then evaluate the proposal and ensure it is appropriate for the Plan Commission to review the conceptual plan and then the Village Board would review the conceptual review. All of this would occur before final plans are created. The final plans would then be submitted and reviewed by staff for consistency. The Plan Commission would then review the final plan and make a recommendation to the Village Board. PUD Ordinances can vary from Zoning and exception standards when there is excellence in engineering and/or design without determining hardship. The Ordinance will also need procedures for amendments to an approval.

Trustee Clayton questioned when standards could become too restrictive so no development could meet the standards or there is a legal restriction on property rights. Mr. Brown explained there is a point that goes too far where all of the opportunities are exhausted. You have to allow for a reasonable use of property. If you are not allowing someone to make a legitimate financial use of the property, you are taking away from using the property. A PUD allows a developer to not only make use of the underlying Zoning, but also creates design standards. The height restrictions and setback restrictions are likely to be less restrictive in a PUD Ordinance.

Ch. Breitkopf would like to see a draft. Mr. Witt suggested the commissioners send (only) him any suggestions on what they would like to see in a draft Ordinance. He will then work with Mr. Huvad and Mr. Brown on a draft Ordinance. This is a unique opportunity to provide input in crafting future developments in Riverwoods. Mr. Brown believes the commissioners will want to provide guidance and direction on what is consistent with the desired standards. Ms. Romanelli asked if the Thorngate Ordinance would be used as a template. Mr. Brown believes the Thorngate Ordinance addressed the issues that were relevant at the time, but things have evolved such as stormwater and the age of the population. Ch. Breitkopf suggested looking at the more environmental-sensitive communities.

5. Staff Report

Mr. Witt provided updates including:

1. The Brunch Factory attorney provided a summary of traffic issues which is not what was requested as it does not address patrons entering and exiting the center. There is some movement, but the Village expected a different document.
2. Baby Vegas expressed a clear desire to work with the Village and are looking to develop a long-term relationship. They pulled a permit to split the electric service and ComEd will be performing the work. They are moving forward.
3. Federal Life – Staff met with a potential buyer who is waiting to see what the affordable housing requirements will be.
4. Attorney Huvad and Mr. Witt reviewed the sign permits.
5. Riverwoods Montessori has contacted the Village for approval of an additional garage. The existing approval limits the number of buildings, so it will have to come before the Commission.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business or discussion, Mr. Rothbardt moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Graditor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 pm. The next scheduled meeting of the Plan Commission is April 4, 2024 at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeri Cotton