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Village of Gurnee
Planning and Zoning Board Minutes
February 19, 2020

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Planning and Zoning Board Members Present: Chairman James Sula, Brian Baugh, David Nordentoft, Edwin Paff, and Josh Pejsach

Planning and Zoning Members Absent: Tim Garrity and Laura Reilly

Other Officials Present: David Ziegler, Community Development Director; Tracy Velkover, Planning Manager; and Clara Gable, Associate Planner

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update

Ms. Gable stated that a presentation of the Village's draft Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update (Compass 2040) will be provided by the Village's consultant, Camiros, Ltd. The updated plan establishes a revised set of goals, objectives, and policies to guide growth and investment, and achieve Gurnee's long-term vision for its future. The next step after this review is a public hearing prior to the document being forwarded to the Village Board for adoption.

Arista Strungys, with Camiros, stated that she is here to take the PZB through the first public draft of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. She noted that this is a draft and therefore, she is looking for input on any revisions that need to be made (additions, corrections, etc.). She acknowledged that it is a lot of information to take in at once, so the idea is that the Board take time after tonight's meeting to think about the presentation and look over the draft and get back to staff any comments, concerns, or questions so that staff can forward these on to her for incorporation into a revised draft document that can then be scheduled for review at a public hearing. She reminded the PZB that a Comprehensive Plan is a community's vision for the future, typically a 20-year planning horizon, which is what is prosed with Gurnee's plan. The organization of the plan is around the following 5 key areas:

1. Land Use
2. Community Character Areas
3. Economic Development
4. Environment and Open Space
5. Mobility

As the Board is aware, most Comprehensive Land Use Plans start with a vision statement, what the community is seeking to accomplish moving forward through land use policies and future development. Some of the key words/phrases that are part of this vision for Gurnee include: fun destination, good place to raise your family, a good place to have your business, providing a

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well-rounded community, seeking to preserve existing housing stock but diversify where appropriate, accommodate workers of every skill level to live within the housing in the community so that they don't have to live elsewhere, promote and support business, continue to provide the excellent public services, provide a diverse work force, reduce congestion and looking at multi-model aspects of transportation, preserve and enhance open space including connections between where possible, and making sure that Gurnee remains a place where people choose to live, conduct their business, and invest.

Ms. Strungys stated that at the beginning of the plan is background information on Gurnee, including:

- History
- Regional context
- Population profile including various demographic statistics
- Existing housing stock and its diversity
- Economy, including commercial, tourism, and industry
- Employment statistics
- Transportation (roadways, truck routes, transit)
- Parks and open space
- Village government
- Education

The first part of the plan lays out where the Village is today based on the existing conditions report that was done previously, as well as other research they did to flush that out fully. She noted that the heart of a Comprehensive Land Use Plan is land use; specifically what are the current land use patterns and what are the future land use patterns envisioned to be. She stated that they want to make sure that they are balancing the different aspects of land use (residential, commercial, industrial, public, and open space) to ensure that it provides consumer choice, diversifies the economy, and continues to be a place where people call home, at the same time doing it in a way that is environmentally responsible/sensitive and sustainable. First, they looked at the existing land use. Ms. Strungys reviewed the existing land use inventory, noting the categories that were used to designate: 4 residential categories (multi-family being the highest density), commercial/business, office/service, industrial/office research, as well as public and quasi-public. Moving into the future land use they got a little more specific. There are 3 residential categories (<3 DU/acre (low density), 3 to <8 DU acre (medium density), and 8 or more DU/area (high density)), commercial (divided into commercial and entertainment), office, and service corridors such as the East Grand area and Village Center area. She noted that industrial has a new category. In addition to straight industrial, the future plan proposes a mixed-use industrial designation for areas that are transitioning from traditional industrial to mixed use that includes some commercial/entertainment uses. The future land use plan would denote these properties, which provides more flexibility on how they might develop in the future. Finally, the future land use plan map divides public and quasi-public into public and semi-public, parks and open space, and utilities/railroads. She noted that a lot of the land use changes that the PZB sees between the existing land use map and future map are really the bringing of things together and "right-sizing" all the different land uses so that things are more

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in-line with each other and the existing development pattern. In particular, for residential they wanted to make sure that they reflected the current neighborhood development patterns. In addition, she noted that the PZB will see some higher density residential being brought in to allow for an increase diversity of housing stock (Washington near the Tri-State as well as within the Village's ETJ areas especially in the northeast and southwest areas). Regarding commercial designations, the future plan separates out the Village Center and East Grand areas into their own categories, as well as makes adjustments between the types of commercial (i.e., division between entertainment and commercial), and finally, creates the new mixed-use industrial category, as discussed earlier (Tri-State Parkway area). She noted that the future land use map, although it can be hard to see on the screen, highlights (dashed outlines) the areas that have changed from the existing Land Use Map to the Future Land Use Map.

She reiterated a goal of maintaining a balance of land uses, and looking at the mix of housing units/types. Specifically, whether Gurnee becoming the repository for the area's senior housing demand. She noted that the numbers appear to be a little high for Gurnee as compared to the surrounding area, but noted that, while it's not the role of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, perhaps a housing study would be warranted for Gurnee to make sure that the number of senior units doesn't get too skewed. Other goals include:

- Support existing commercial base and local/unique businesses
- Continuing to attract new industrial & office businesses
- Continuing to grow where there are existing services and facilities in place
- Ensure that development occurs in a manner and quality that promotes a positive image of Gurnee (gateway features at major entries to help tie relationship between east and west Gurnee, looking to develop vacant/underutilized parcels, improving streetscape, burying utilities when feasible, promoting and maintaining/preserving the urban tree canopy)

The draft plan provides a map highlight key gateway areas that would be appropriate for the above noted goals.

Ms. Strungys explained the plan draft looks a two specific opportunity sites that were identified. She noted that plans for these opportunity sites were presented previously to the Board and that, based on that feedback revisions were made. The first was the Village Center area and the idea is to reinforce the existing character (low scale residential/professional). The conversion of existing homes to businesses presents a lot of difficulties in regards to building codes so the idea is to continue the same course for this area. In regards to East Grand Avenue, she noted that there was a study conducted by the Urban Land Institute (ULI). She noted that they summarized some of the study's main points in the Comp Plan update, but it discusses creating a mixed-use area that has a more "maker" feel to it based on some of the existing businesses. So the Comp Plan just reinforces the strategies that were put forth in the ULI study.

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Ms. Strungys noted that they looked at two other larger areas of potential development. The first area is the NEC of O'Plaine and Rt. 120 and the second is the area near Milwaukee and Washington Street. The plan for the O'Plaine/Rt. 120 parcel would include some residential toward the north (approximately 45 attached single-family) and then as you move south on the site providing mixed-use including some multi-family and mixed-use (not the industrial mixed-use), with some possible office/commercial further south and east along the property's roadway frontage. This plan is just a "concept" of how this property could develop. The second area they looked at was closer to Six Flags, near the Washington Street/Milwaukee corridor. This area is a little tricky because it's divided into 3 parts. The first is an entertainment core on the large triangle piece bounded by the Tollway, Washington Street and Milwaukee. The concept plan provides a sort of plaza when entering the site from Washington Street and providing for commercial development, potentially some mixed-use, and potentially a hotel. Based on the size of the parcel it could accommodate approximately 100,000 sq. ft. of entertainment space (sky diving, bowling, Dave and Busters, etc.). The second part of this area is a more industrial/flex. This portion is south of Washington Street, west of the Tollway. The buildings reflect a flexible layout with preservation of some of the natural areas around that could be used as an amenity (walking trails) for workers. The last part of this area is the part east of Milwaukee south of Woodlake Apartments. The vacant parcels in this area are proposed for a continuation of the multi-family development immediately to the north.

Ms. Strungys discussed the economic development portion of the Comp Plan, noting that the goal is to support existing businesses while also attracting new businesses. She noted that one of the largest employers in the Village is in the retail sector, but indicated that office and industrial are equally important and there is a need to support and grow these businesses and protect them from encroachments. She specifically pointed out that the Industrial/Mixed Use category is a carefully curated set of uses that are compatible with each other. She indicated that the Village does not want to allow multi-family to start encroaching into these areas. The Village should continue to market vacant and underutilized commercial, industrial, and office parcels. Also, she noted the importance of looking at truck routes to ensure that routes are designated and functioning properly, including identifying where new truck routes might be designated, ensuring the routes are properly maintained, identifying difficulties in the routes (intersections, etc.), identifying gaps, and working with the other jurisdictions (IDOT, LCDOT, etc.). In regards to retail, she noted that the plan recognizes the importance of retail to the Village, but noted that retail is changing and so the plan points to the importance of bolstering the other parts of economic development (office and industrial). Over time there may be ways to connect these areas to public transit so that there are easier ways to get employees to and from work. Finally, the regional attractions in Gurnee are incredibly important. The goal is to ensure that within zoning, Gurnee Mills is allowed to adapt to the changing nature of retail, support the marketing of the mall, support the other regional attractions (Six Flags and Great Wolf Lodge), and look toward expanding the regional attractions with some entertainment uses on the parcel south of Six Flags.

In regards to open space, Ms. Strungys noted a goal of promoting and protecting open space. The Village needs to support the network of green space in the community, especially the area around the Des Plaines River Trail, which is an amenity that not many communities have.

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These resources should be protected from inappropriate encroachment, and areas prone to flooding should be incorporated into open space. PUDs should be used to protect natural resources when there are natural resources on a property and delineation of wetlands should be required. Finally, it is important to look at ways to make connections between open space areas.

Ms. Strungys stated that a goal of the plan is to improve/increase mobility, specifically how to move people around the Village not just by car, but by pedestrian/bicycle lanes, and transit, and to do this in a way that is safe and efficient. The plan provides a recommendation to adopt a “complete streets policy” and instruction on how to do that. The Village has had success is working with the various other authorities (IDOT, LCDOT) to obtain pedestrian paths/sidewalks when reconstruction projects are planned, so the goal is to continue this work. The installation of bus shelters and pedestrian amenities is identified so that transit starts to become incorporated into mobility considerations. She noted that Gurnee’s bicycle and pedestrian master plan identifies key streets to focus paths/lanes on in order to provide for connections. Finally, improving public transit; coordinating with PACE to fill in gaps in bus service, METRA, Amtrak, and continue to explore opportunities to expand these services.

Mr. Sula complimented Ms. Strungys on the draft plan. He stated that the document indicates that Gurnee has a slightly older population than Lake County and, in his opinion, the Village doesn’t have a lot of housing opportunities for seniors, not including the assisted living and memory care facilities. He noted that when he thinks of senior housing he thinks of “age-in-place” facilities where you buy into a condo at one stage in your life and, as your needs change, you move into another portion of the facility that can accommodate those needs. He asked where the concern is coming from regarding the senior housing.

Ms. Strungys stated that the concern is really more geared toward the assisted living, memory care, and nursing home type of facilities. The plan is not against “age-in-place” facilities, but there is a concern that a disproportionate amount of non-independent senior facilities can strain community services (police, fire, and rescue).

Mr. Paff mentioned a campus like “age-in-place” facility in Lindenhurst and Friendship Village in Schaumburg. Mr. Sula mentioned Smith or Smith’s Crossing in Orland Park.

Mr. Paff asked if there has been any talk about a pedestrian bridge over the Tollway on Grand.

Mr. Ziegler indicated that, with the full clover-leaf on Grand and the Tollway, pedestrian travel across is difficult. The distance of the bridge span results in significant expense. By the time you get to where the ramps are tight enough to get a bridge over you are almost up to Stearns School Road or down to Washington Street, where the Village has an existing pedestrian system under the Tollway. He noted that he has seen stop lights on ramps to allow for safe pedestrian crossing, but based upon the amount of traffic exiting and entering the Tollway at this location this would not be advisable.

Mr. Paff asked if Stearns School Road is being reconstructed.

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Mr. Ziegler stated that Stearns School Road and the bridge are being reconstructed. The Village is participating in the pedestrian component of this project, which includes the addition of a sidewalk on the south side of the road and bridge over the Tollway, in addition to the bike path that is on the north side. Finally, Mr. Ziegler noted that the County is planning on rebuilding the intersection of Hunt Club Road and Washington Street in 2022 and part of that project includes the extension of the pedestrian trail from Dax Tax to the intersection of Hunt Club and Washington Street, as well as the installation of sidewalk along Hunt Club from Wildflower (south) to the Hunt Club Park (north).

Mr. Pejsach asked what the PZB should be looking at/for with their deeper dive into the plan after this meeting is over (i.e., what sort of feedback is requested).

Ms. Strungys stated that, as PZB members, you are intimately familiar with the workings of the Village and development and redevelopment scenarios that the Village has. She noted that they tried to provide as much detail as they could in the draft document, but there may be some things in the plan that you, as board members, can provide more detail on, or provide corrections, or additions if something is missing. For instance, if there is a policy that you are aware of that you think is important and might be helpful to you when making land use decisions, then that would be something to mention. She stated that it is important for this document to work to help you make decisions that carry forward the community's vision.

Ms. Velkover also asked for each member to really look at the existing conditions map and then the future land use map, as there are areas of change and staff wants to make sure that you are all comfortable with those changes. Generally, tweaks to residential densities occurred and some additional higher density residential areas were mapped in recognition of changing housing markets. She specifically mentioned the middle piece in Northridge Plaza, which is proposed to change from commercial to high density residential. She mentioned this because it was discussed at the previous meeting and was not warmly received, but no decision was made on how to proceed. So it is currently reflected as high density residential, which is a change from the previous designation.

Ms. Strungys stated that she can email to staff a map that highlights the changed areas so that the board members can zoom in on it on their computers, which might be easier than trying to read the small printed map.

Mr. Sula asked that members get any of their comments, concerns, and additions to either Clara or Tracy in the next week, so that staff can forward those on to the consultant. The plan would then be for the consultant to adjust the document so that a public hearing can be scheduled. He asked what the time frame might be for scheduling a public hearing.

Ms. Velkover stated that they would have to work with Ms. Strungys to determine their availability, but that currently staff has public hearings scheduled through the end of April. So realistically, the earliest is probably sometime in May unless a special meeting is held.

Ms. Strungys thanked the Board and encouraged continued communication as the Plan moves along in the process of adoption.

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4. Informal Review: Ron Sachs (16530 W. Washington Street and 34644 N. Cemetery Road)

Ms. Gable stated that Mr. Ron Sachs is requesting informal review/feedback on a plan for a mixed use development consisting of retail, self-storage, and possibly residential on property generally located at the northwest corner of Washington Street and Cemetery Road. The subject properties are at 16530 W. Washington Street and 34644 N. Cemetery Road and consist of approximately 10-acres zoned E, Estate, in unincorporated Lake County. The property is surrounded by residential, commercial, public, and industrial-zoned properties in the Village of Gurnee and Estate-zoned property in the County. The Village's current Comprehensive Land Use Plan reflects "Office/Service" for the 16530 W. Washington Street property and Low Density Residential for the 34644 N. Cemetery Road property. The Draft Comp Plan reflects "Commercial" for the 16530 W. Washington Street property and "Medium Density Residential" for the 34644 N. Cemetery Road property. The applicant is in attendance to present his proposal.

Mr. Sula reminded that no votes would be taken on this item, and that no commitment would be made by either the Board or the applicant.

Mr. Sachs gave a presentation on the proposed project, explaining that the project is a combination two types of development he and his wife already own in a neighboring area of Gurnee (commercial) and in Beach Park (self-storage). The subject parcel is at the northwest corner of Cemetery Road and Washington Street. Proposed is a commercial component closer to the intersection, with self-storage further back off from the intersection. The Cemetery Road parcel is narrow and deep and their plan includes self-storage on that property too, along with storm water detention. He elaborated that the storage facility would consist of approximately 75,000 to 100,000 square feet, while the retail component would occupy approximately 10,000 to 12,000 sq. ft. He stated they are currently in a building off of Washington Street and Old Walnut Circle (unincorporated Lake County). They own the building and occupy approximately 5,000 sq. ft. They are interested in moving to the proposed retail facility on the subject site and subsidizing the development with the self-storage. He offered to answer any questions.

Mr. Sula asked if there were any questions/comments from the Board.

Mr. Nordentoft stated that there are definitely some challenges for this site, particularly because of the Cemetery Road parcel and how narrow and deep it is. He stated that he is not comfortable with the use given the existing low density residential that is in the area. He also said that when he thinks of self-storage he thinks of a range of activities that take place with this use. Some of it concerns him as to the appropriateness of it relative to the residential neighborhood. He noted that a lot of times self-storage units end up being an extension of someone's business (i.e., a remote shop). So there can be some activities that occur from these facilities that won't be good neighbors to the existing residential. He noted the challenges of the parcel given its depth and width. He stated that he does not have any issues with the retail component on the corner.

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Mr. Sachs said that they do not own the property and are looking for possible use to subsidize the commercial they are proposing on the corner. To do any additional retail on that property, because of its shape and limited access, is not possible. He also noted that, although it hasn't been on the market, it's known to be for sale and it hasn't been developed yet. When the neighborhood to the west was developed it could have developed at that time.

Mr. Nordentoft clarified that he believes that the Comprehensive Land Use Plan designation of residential for the Cemetery Road parcel is still appropriate given the adjacent land use. Having storage as an immediate neighbor to residential is not something that he supports.

Mr. Sachs noted that he was informed that Churchill Lane was intended to be continued through to the property to the north, with homes on either side. He offered a plan that showed the continuation of the road, with two single-family lots on either side of the road extension. However, he noted that this only addresses a portion of the west side of the property. His plan would still have self-storage on the remaining portion of the Cemetery Road parcel. He indicated that assembling all of the narrow deep lots along Cemetery Road would be difficult.

Mr. Paff pointed out that not assembling enough to provide the continuation of residential with access provided to continue is all that is needed. Not all of the lots need to be assembled.

Mr. Sachs pointed out that there are a number of residential care facilities, including memory care facilities and retirement facilities in the area and they provide a demand for storage. A majority of their customers would probably come from these areas.

Mrs. Sachs stated that the main purpose of this development is to allow her to expand her business, which is currently in unincorporated Lake County. They are also the owners of a self-storage facility that has been through the zoning process. That facility is adjacent to residential in Beach Park. They have height limitations on what they can store and commitments on what the building will look like. She noted that they would make it work well with the retail component and build in phases. She noted that the other option would be to extend Churchill Lane and provide a total of 4 residential lots (2 on each side of the extended road). However, the remaining portion to the east would still be proposed for self-storage. She noted that they are trying to see if this is something that Village would be receptive to. Right now, in the County, the site is a mess with boat storage and carnival use (storage). She said what they are proposing would be much improved from existing conditions.

Mr. Sachs presented photos of their existing self-storage development.

Mr. Paff asked if the "L" shaped parcel is all under one ownership.

Ms. Sachs indicated that it is all under one ownership. She also stated that she didn't know if city sewer and water were required for self-storage, but that she would need it for the retail component and they could, if allowed, put a holding tank on the site for sewer.

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Mr. Ziegler stated that public water and sanitary sewer are currently available to the site. Annexation of the property is required to serve the property with public utilities. No other community or water/sanitary sewer provider may service the property.

Mr. Baugh stated that, at first, he was against the self-storage on the property adjacent to residential, but that he drives by the site every day and currently there is a lot of junk stored on the site. He indicated he might be more receptive to it if it cleans up the site.

Ms. Sachs noted that Gurnee would have more control over what could occur on the site, which would enhance the neighborhood. Ideally they would like to place self-storage on the entire property to the north, but a compromise would be to extend residential along the western portion.

Ms. Velkover clarified that Churchill Lane is stubbed to the property to the north. It does not end in a cul-de-sac and therefore, was always intended to be extended to provide access to the property to the north for a continuation of residential. She also agreed with Mr. Nordentoft that it is difficult to develop that Cemetery Road property, by itself. But assembling that parcel with one or more of the long deep parcels along Cemetery Road make development possible. If self-storage is placed on the Cemetery Road parcel, it will be sandwiched between residential (the existing residential to the south and future residential that is reflected on both the Village's existing and draft Comprehensive Land Use Plan to the north).

Ms. Sachs asked if all of that property is unincorporated currently.

Ms. Velkover stated that it is unincorporated.

Mr. Pejsach stated that he does not have any concerns with the retail and self-storage on the corner. However, the extension of the self-storage in back (north) of the residential subdivision is of concern.

Mr. Sula stated that he also doesn't have any issue with the retail building at the corner and self-storage in back (north) of the retail. However, he believes that the self-storage buildings north of Winchester Estates could be residential structures. He believes there is a way to develop in that manner. He concurs with Mr. Baugh's first thought on the matter, that sandwiching self-storage between residential is not a good idea. He views it as more of a transitional use to high density commercial or industrial and not between two residential areas.

Ms. Sachs stated that they aren't going to purchase this property if it is going to be an obstacle, although their other option is to find out what would be allowed in the County.

Mr. Paff agreed that what is proposed for the corner of the site appears reasonable, but that he does not support self-storage on the Cemetery Road parcel.

Mr. Pejsach asked Mr. Sula to clarify what he was talking about when he referred to the last 3 buildings being residential structures. He asked if he was talking about the last page in their packet.

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Mr. Sula stated that is what he was referring to. He summarized the PZB's concerns, especially with the self-storage on the Cemetery Road parcel.

4. Next Meeting Date: March 4, 2020

Ms. Gable stated that there is a Public Hearing scheduled for the next meeting.

5. Public Comment

There were no public comments at this meeting.

6. Adjournment

Mr. Nordentoft motioned, seconded by Mr. Baugh, to adjourn the meeting.

Voice vote:

All "Ayes," no "Nays," None abstaining

Motion carried: 5-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joann Metzger,
Recording Secretary, Planning and Zoning Board