

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE / HIGHWAY COMMITTEE
JOINT MEETING MINUTES
May 21, 2006

The Planning and Zoning Committee and the Highway Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on May 21, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the Gathertorium located in the DeKalb County Legislative Building. In attendance were P&Z Committee Members Roger Steimel, Marlene Allen, Patricia Vary, Vince Faivre, Eileen Dubin, Howard Lyle and Steve Slack, Highway Committee members Pat Lavigne, Larry Anderson, Julia Fauci, John Gudmunson, Richard Osborne and Jeff Whelan, and staff members Paul Miller and Derek Hiland. Approximately 35 audience members (see attached) were in attendance.

Mr. Steimel, Planning and Zoning Committee Chairman, called the meeting to order, and noted that all members from both Committees were present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Vary moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Fauci, and the motion carried unanimously.

HINCKLEY ROAD/I-88 INTERCHANGE – Informational discussion of request by TWJ for letter of support from DeKalb County for a proposed interchange at Hinckley Road and I-88.

TWJ Associates, Ltd., a development company working with the Town of Cortland, has forwarded a request to the DeKalb County Board for a letter of support for a proposed new interchange at I-88 and Hinckley Road in Cortland Township. The interchange is proposed as part of an 850-acre development that would include residential, commercial and industrial uses on both the north and south sides of I-88. The land to be developed would be annexed to Cortland.

In order to provide an informed response to the request for a letter of support for the interchange, the County requested that representatives of TWJ appear before the joint meeting of the Planning and Zoning and Highway Committees in order to answer questions related to the proposed project. The interchange, if approved by the Toll Authority and constructed, would likely entail improvements to Hinckley Road, including connection to/realignment of Airport Road south of Barber Greene Road. The interchange and road improvements, along with the associated land uses, both those that are currently proposed and those that will be encouraged by the improvements to the transportation network, have the potential for substantial impacts on the pattern and types land uses, the rate and location of development, and the provision of public infrastructure and services, not only in the communities of Cortland, DeKalb and Sycamore but in the entire County.

Mr. Steimel introduced Mayor Bob Seyller of Cortland to discuss the proposed project. Mayor Seyller stated that the idea for an interchange at Hinckley Road and I-88 to accommodate growth was originally conceived in 1999. He stated that the benefits from the new interchange would include expanding the tax base, increasing employment and

easing traffic congestion. Mayor Seyller stated that he wanted to make the right decisions for the region not just for Cortland.

Mayor Seyller introduced Bill Rotolo, President of TWJ, who briefly gave a background of TWJ's history. TWJ developed Newman Homes in Cortland and owns several large parcels of land in the Town and in surrounding portions of DeKalb County. Primarily, TWJ develops residential subdivisions but also has considerable experience in commercial and industrial development as well.

Mr. Rotolo introduced Dave Orrico, who is the project manager for the proposed interchange project. Mr. Orrico displayed a copy of the 2004 Town of Cortland Comprehensive Plan which shows an interchange at Hinckley Road. He stated that TWJ has been working with the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority (ISTHA) for the past eight months to discuss the location of an interchange at Hinckley Road. TWJ has hired V3 Companies to collect current and projected traffic data for this area as well as design the geometric layout of the interchange. TWJ has begun the permit review process with ISTHA, submitting a design that shows a half-diamond interchange while reserving rights-of-way for a full interchange based on forecasted traffic counts from future growth that might occur in the region. Mr. Orrico went on to state that working with Cortland will diversify the housing stock but also allocate land for future commercial and industrial developments. As a result, Cortland will receive a balanced growth program with residents, sales tax and job growth. He stated that DeKalb County's traffic circulation will improve with this interchange and the realignment of Airport Road to link to Hinckley Road, plus direct access to and from Chicago will be provided as part of the Illinois Tollway System. Mr. Orrico concluded by stating that a timetable and finances for the interchange project have not yet been worked out. TWJ estimates that the interchange will take a minimum of five to seven years before construction begins, and the money may come from various sources, including possibly State and Federal funding.

Following TWJ's presentation, Mr. Steimel opened the meeting to questions and answers from Committee members. Ms. Fauci inquired whether or not the models being utilized to project numbers of trips associated with the interchange and the proposed land uses take into account gas price increases over the next decade. Kirsten Frank with Land Vision, the Town Planner for Cortland, responded by stating that the models do not look at gas prices. Tom Koenig of TWJ also responded that gas prices will not curtail the use of automobiles as the primary means of transportation in this area and the Country in general.

Noting that they had received a list of questions from the County in advance of the meeting, representatives of TWJ and Cortland stated that, at this time, most of the questions could not be answered. They explained that the project is in the very preliminary phases and has not even been brought to the Town of Cortland for consideration of an amendment to its Comprehensive Plan yet. The Town intends to take up the possibility of amending its plan in the middle of June, 2006.

Ms. Fauci asked whether or not property taxes would be increased to fund the new infrastructure and public services that would be necessary should the residential, commercial and industrial land uses associated with the proposed interchange be constructed. Ms. Frank stated that Cortland is young with infrastructure so very little maintenance is required, and currently Cortland is collecting \$3,000 in impact fees for every three bedroom home constructed and \$5,000 for every four or more

bedroom constructed. She indicated that there should not be a significant increase in property taxes to accommodate growth.

Mr. Whalen inquired whether or not TWJ had been in contact with the Illinois Department of Transportation to discuss possible impacts to, and necessary improvements of, the existing road system should the interchange be constructed. Representatives of TWJ stated that no contact has been made with IDOT as of yet.

In response to question from Mr. Steimel, TWJ representatives stated that they are not at this time counting on County funds to help construct the proposed interchange.

Ms. Lavigne asked whether or not users for the proposed industrial area has been secured. TWJ indicated that no specific users have yet committed.

Mr. Faivre stated that he keeps hearing that Waste Management is heavily involved in this project because a project like this could lead into a "backdoor entrance" to a larger County landfill. Mayor Seyller stated that he has not any talks with Waste Management. However, TWJ stated that Waste Management would have an active interest in the proposed project and for clarification, Mr. Rotolo stated that TWJ is not working with Waste Management on any expansions of the landfill.

Mrs. Dubin inquired whether or not the project will continue should the interchange not get approved. TWJ stated that with an interchange, the Town of Cortland would be more likely to attract tax generators more quickly, but if an interchange is not approved the result would likely be slower growth but not an end to growth for Cortland.

In response to a question by Mr. Slack, TWJ stated that they currently own approximately 250 acres and have contracts on another 800 acres. Mr. Slack continued by asking if TWJ would agree to do a fiscal analysis, concerning such things as the costs of necessary increases in public services and the sources of funding those increases, for the entire County not just for the Town of Cortland. TWJ responded by stating that this project has been planned as a tax generating project and without an interchange in place it would be difficult to surmise the outcome. Mr. Rotolo clarified that TWJ is working with the Town of Cortland, and would follow the Town's direction on any required studies associated with the project.

Mr. Steimel then opened the meeting to questions from the public.

Tom Runty from the Kaneland School District stated that the District does not endorse or oppose any new development from occurring, however, the District's concern is overcrowding in the schools. Mr. Runty asked whether or not TWJ has ruled out a SSA tax? TWJ stated that they have not done so yet but have considered using it.

Ray Bockman, County Administrator, inquired whether or not Cortland or TWJ has a vision of what South of Route 88 looks like? Mayor Seyller responded by stating that Cortland never really considered developing south of I-88 because it was never brought to their attention until now.

Kevin Hickey, DeKalb County Sheriff, stated that this year alone the DeKalb County Sheriff's Department have assisted Cortland police on 71 different occasions, and he noted that the County Jail is overcrowded. Mr. Hickey asked if there has been any considerations likely impacts on providing police service to agencies outside of Cortland? Ms. Frank responded by stating that Cortland does have set asides for cash to help with increased police costs.

Paul Miller, Planning Director, inquired if there was a deadline for a response to the requested letter of support from the County? TWJ representatives indicated that ISTHA did not ask for a letter of support from the County. Supplying a letter of support from the County would be entirely voluntary.

Following questions from the audience, Mr. Steimel thanked everyone for attending. He noted that the project is far less definite and detailed than he had been lead to believe, that it was much earlier in the planning stage. He indicated that it would be a good idea to continue having meetings as the project progresses and more answers rather than questions could be gathered. All in attendance agreed that it would be beneficial to continue communications between the County and Cortland.

ADJOURNMENT - *Ms. Vary moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Whalen, and the motion carried unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Steimel
Planning and Zoning Committee Chairman

DH:dh

P:\Zoning\P&ZCommittee\Minutes\2006 Minutes\P&ZMay06.wpd