

**PLAN COMMISSION  
STUDY SESSION NOTES  
JULY 15, 2024**

**I. Call To Order**

The Plan Commission Study Session was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Vice-President William Jarvis at the Schererville Town Hall, 10 E. Joliet St.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. Roll Call

Roll call was taken with the following members present: Vice-President William Jarvis, Secretary Gary Immig, Mr. Myles Long, Mr. Robert Kocon, and Mr. Tom Kouros. Staff present: Town Manager James Gorman, Director of Operations Andrew Hansen, Planning & Building Administrator Denise Sulek, and Recording Secretary Megan Schiltz. Absent were President Tom Anderson and Mr. Chris Rak.

**II. Commission Business**

A. Jarrett's Southern View Subdivision

General Location: 10304 W. 85<sup>th</sup> Ave. – East of Amber Fields Subdivision, West of Pine Hill Subdivision, and North of 85<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Petitioner(s): Brian Lantz

Request: 21-Lot (R-1) Residential Subdivision

Mr. Doug Rettig from DVG Engineering handed out a revised Conceptual Site Plan to the board and staff for a 26-Lot (R-1) Residential Subdivision. Mr. Rettig informed the board that the proposed residential subdivision would be located east of the Amber Fields Subdivision and just west of the Pine Hill Subdivision. Mr. Rettig stated that they have an opportunity to connect the streets to have a better flow through the subdivisions, utilizing the entrances to the two existing subdivisions as the access points. Mr. Rettig went on to say that Mr. Lantz had owned this property for a long time and that his son lives on the northern corner that would be adjacent to where the pond would be going. Mr. Rettig said that the cul-de-sac is on the south end of the property and would be 30 ft. or 40 ft. longer than what is allowed; adding that with the allowable being 600 ft. and this 630 ft. or more, they would possibly be needing a waiver. Mr. Rettig stated that the size of the 26 lots all meet the minimum allowance with some being extra wide or extra deep so there would be a little more room. Mr. Rettig went on to say that they had wetland delineations done and that there were wetlands on the property that they would need to take care of but nothing major; adding IDEM had looked at it and there was a small area that they would need to impact but it would be a manageable impact. Mr. Jarvis stated that he believed it would be appropriate to go for a waiver since there is such a short distance on the cul-de-sac; adding that it is the dimensions that are normally accepted as far as the trucks turning. Mr. Rettig replied that the radius is 60 ft. per ordinance for the right of way and 50 ft. for the back of the curb, being a little bigger than some other communities. Mr. Rettig went on to say that they had not looked into needing waivers or variances yet and would like to keep the lots wider on the west side; going on to say that they may need to ask for a relief on a reduced side building line of 20 ft. on corner Lot 23. Mr. Rettig went on to say that around the cul-de-sac they may need help on having a 25 ft. front and rear setback on Lots 14 and 17 because they were tight. Mr. Jarvis asked Ms. Sulek if Lot 23 would have to go before the B.Z.A. or could it stay with the Plan Commission. Ms. Sulek responded that they would be able to go for a waiver.

Mr. Brian Lantz from 511 Hilbrich Dr. stated that with the 20 ft. setback on the north side of Lot 23, they would like to keep the 30 ft. setback on the side facing the cul-de-sac street with the understanding that the house would face on the 30 ft. setback side. Mr. Lantz went on to say that his subdivision trademark is using post lights instead of street lights that would go on at sunrise and off at daybreak; adding that it evenly distributes the light verses having really

bright street lights at the corner. Mr. Jarvis asked Ms. Sulek if she had any input on the lights. Ms. Sulek replied that she did not. Mr. Immig asked if the retention pond is part of the project or if it was on the other lot. Mr. Lantz replied that they had drawn the detention pond to be adjacent to the parcel but located off site. Mr. Lantz said that because the detention pond would take up too much room, there was an agreement with his son to put the pond on his parcel. Mr. Lantz went on to say that he would still dedicate an easement on the Town property that was annexed in and would also have an easement going to that for access and maintenance. Mr. Lantz said that he was still not sure if he would put it between two lots or use the 30 ft. easement off the north end. Mr. Long asked if the drawings on Lot 23 were wetlands. Mr. Rettig replied that was correct and that it is where the largest consideration of wetlands were because they were impacting where the road was going to be. Mr. Rettig continued to say that they would need to pay an impact fee and researched what it would be to make the entire wetland go away. Mr. Rettig stated that it had been looked at by IDEM and Mr. Lantz felt that it would be manageable and worth paying the "tax" to gain the lot; going on to say that Mr. Marty Maupin from IDEM is on board with that. Mr. Jarvis asked if this were a onetime fee and if Mr. Lantz would pay or the future homeowner. Mr. Rettig responded that Mr. Lantz would take care of it since it is part of the subdivision. Mr. Rettig explained to the board that wetlands are graded as Class I, Class II, and Class III. Mr. Rettig went on to say that this is a Class III and would need to buy credits on a wetland bank to get the right to fill the wetland in with a permit. Mr. Lantz stated that he had spent 2 years going back and forth with the Army Corp. on this project; adding that he was aware the Town wants to try and get Buckingham Lane to run through and that they had spent a lot of time and effort looking into it. Mr. Lantz went on to say that if they grant them the ability to mitigate a buyout of the wetland area, this would be the layout they were targeting.

Mr. Jarvis asked what the development time frame would be. Mr. Lantz stated that they still needed to find out what the Army Corp. is going to allow them to do, because a small part of the wetland approaches on Buckingham Lane; adding that they would have to negotiate to see if they could make this work and that his intentions were that once approved he would move forward but there is no time frame yet. Mr. Jarvis stated that if there were a major change they would need to come back for another Study Session, but if minor they would deal with staff before going in for Primary Approval. Mr. Kouros asked Mr. Lantz if his son owns the house off of 85<sup>th</sup> St. with the long driveway. Mr. Lantz replied that was correct. Mr. Kouros stated that there was a for sale sign at the lot next to that house and asked Mr. Lantz if he owned that as well. Mr. Lantz replied that he did not and that it was for the next lot over in Amber Fields. Mr. Gorman asked if they had any conversations with the neighbors to the east regarding sidewalk extensions to tie into this subdivision; going on to say that he knows that they own the property but who would be doing it. Mr. Lantz responded that he had not had any conversations. Mr. Rettig stated that the gentleman on the north side owns that outlot and the south had a vacant lot that the sidewalk would be in once that house gets built. Mr. Rettig went on to say that at the north side there is a 40ft. outlot which the gentleman who lives in the house owns, so there would have to be some discussion since he owns it and is liable to put it in. Mr. Rettig asked if overall the board is ok with the concepts and the layout. Mr. Jarvis replied yes and that it was pretty straight forward.

#### B. Bank of America

General Location: 341 Indianapolis Blvd. – Oak District Phase 1, Lot 2

Petitioner(s): Allegro Civil Engineers – Lauren Marshall

Request: U.S. 41 Commercial Corridor Overlay District Development Review

Mr. Brian Emrich from Allegra Civil Engineers represented the petitioners. Mr. Emrich stated that on the projector screen was the contemplated Bank of America Development which is currently a gravel lot on Indianapolis Blvd. located between Chick-Fil-A and Longhorn Steakhouse. Mr. Emrich informed the board that they were hoping to build a 4,500 sq. ft. single story bank branch with 2 ATM drive-thru lanes and a bypass lane. Mr. Emrich said that last month Ms. Lauren Marshall went before the Board of Zoning Appeals to get a variance approved for a drive-thru use within the U.S. 41 Zoning Overlay District. Mr. Emrich went on to say that they are proposing two driveway entrances on the internal access road for this development with primitive parking and an ADA path of travel to the right-of-way. Mr. Emrich added that on the subsequent sheets there was the landscape plan which was consistent with the adjacent developments to the north and south; as well as bicycle racks along the path of travel from the right-of-way to the front entrance on the west side of the building. Mr. Emrich said that they are proposing some parking within the front yard on the

west side. Mr. Emrich stated that as they understood that in the base zoning district they had a 15 ft. offset which includes an 8 ft. wide sidewalk on the west side of the building. Mr. Emrich went on to say that included in the submittal there was a digital façade materials board. Mr. Jarvis asked how large the sign was. Mr. Emrich replied that there is one monument sign proposed that is about 8.5 ft. wide and 6 ft. tall. Mr. Jarvis stated that it was not actually digital and would be a permanent sign. Mr. Emrich responded that was correct. Mr. Jarvis stated that there should not be a problem with the size of the front; going on to say that both he and Mr. Kouros are liaisons' for the B.Z.A and there were no issues with the drive-thru. Mr. Jarvis then asked Ms. Sulek if the materials on the stucco plaster were acceptable within the brick. Mr. Sulek replied that it was. Mr. Gorman reminded the petitioner that they would need landscaping around the sign per the ordinance. Mr. Emrich questioned about there being a requirement on a two story minimum for the building height. Ms. Sulek stated that it could be waived. Mr. Jarvis informed the petitioner that they would need to include that waiver when they come back for primary approval. Mr. Emrich said that they would like to get on the agenda as soon as possible, however, the next step would be to find a general contractor for the project. Ms. Sulek stated that this was a platted lot so they would be coming back on August 5<sup>th</sup> for Primary on a U.S. 41 Overlay Plan. Ms. Sulek went on to say that they do not need to advertise for the waiver and that it would be up to the board if they were going to require that it be a two story building.

### C. Auto Dealership

General Location: 5800-5830 Lincoln Hwy. – Clarendale of Schererville, Outlot A

Petitioner(s): Webb Auto Group  
President, Kelly Webb Roberts & Vice-President, Brian Webb

Request: U.S. 30 Commercial Corridor Overlay District Development Review

Mrs. Kelly Webb Roberts, Webb Auto Group President, and Mr. Brian Webb, Vice-President of Webb Auto Group, represented the petitioners. Mrs. Webb Roberts stated that they had also brought Mr. Ryan Torrenge from Torrenge Engineering, Mr. Eric Ohlfs, Project Architect from Redmond Corporation, and Real Estate Broker Mr. Gerry Stiener. Mrs. Webb Roberts informed the board that the Webb Family have been doing business in Northwest Indiana for over fifty years and that they currently have a store in Highland as well as Merrillville. Mrs. Webb Roberts said that Genesis is an up and coming luxury brand that is looking to be the number one luxury brand and are very aggressive and particular with their plans. Mrs. Webb Roberts went on to say that they have gone down to just one Genesis franchise because there is no need to have two stores located in Lake County. Mrs. Webb Roberts added that there was one located in Highland but Genesis is requiring to have a stand-alone facility, so it had to be moved to a temporary location in Merrillville. Mrs. Webb Roberts stated that the original plan was to stay in Merrillville, however, the brand is growing more rapidly than anticipated and are going to be covering a lot more territory. Mrs. Webb Roberts continued to say that they did not want to have too many locations so they were probably going to be servicing an area of approximately 100 miles. Mrs. Webb Roberts said the Genesis is super particular on the brand and what these facilities are going to look like and where they would be located. Mrs. Webb Roberts added that they were looking to go into a Town that had other dealerships of higher caliber, such as Jaguar Land Rover across from the proposed site and the new Ziegler Subaru located just west of the site. Mrs. Webb Roberts provided the board with renderings from Genesis on what the facility was going to look like, adding it would be branded as Genesis of Schererville. Mrs. Webb Roberts went on to show pictures of some of the other Genesis stores from around the country. Mrs. Webb Roberts stated that they have several car dealerships and that this was going to be one of the biggest investments; adding that the contractor stated that this project would be the highest cost per square foot dealership facility to build. Mrs. Webb Roberts then stated that the building would be modern and almost 51% of which would be glass. Mrs. Webb Roberts then proceeded to show the board interior concepts from some of the other Genesis facilities.

Mr. Jarvis stated that he was familiar with the Hyundai Dealership in Merrillville and that it had come out looking very nice. Mrs. Webb Roberts said that this project would be the same contractor and architect as the Hyundai in Merrillville that was built from the ground up. Mrs. Webb Roberts went on to say that the original plan was to be located where the old facility was in Merrillville, which is where Genesis is temporarily located; adding that Hyundai is growing so the site would not work at that location. Mrs. Webb Roberts continued to say that the Genesis Corporation wanted them to build bigger so they started to look elsewhere. Mrs. Webb Roberts stated that they had been doing their due diligence on

the site located just to the west of the Ziegler Subaru Dealership, but the seller would not extend the due diligence period to do further investigations on wet land issues. Mrs. Webb Roberts added that this site came up because there had been a previous deal that fell through; going on to say that they actually liked this site better because it was right across from the Jaguar Dealership. Mrs. Webb Roberts continued to say that the manufacturer requires a minimum of 2.8 acres of land and this land is 3.8 acres. Mr. Jarvis asked how many square feet the actual building would be. Mrs. Webb Roberts replied it would be approximately 20,000-21,000 sq. ft. Mr. Jarvis then asked if that included the service as well. Mrs. Webb Roberts replied that was correct. Mrs. Webb Roberts went on to say that they are also looking to do an underground water detention so they could have more parking spaces on the lot. Mr. Jarvis stated that this would be a beautiful addition to the corridor. Mrs. Webb Roberts informed the board that there were also subsequent sites that have the floor plan and elevation drawings on the projector. Mr. Jarvis wanted to confirm that they currently had a Genesis Dealership located in their facility. Mrs. Webb Roberts responded that was correct and that they are separated at a temp facility in Merrillville; adding they had wanted to have this built a year or 2 ago but they wanted to make a better move on this facility and Genesis agreed.

Mr. Jarvis stated that they would have a dealership coverage of about 100 miles. Mrs. Webb Roberts said that is what they were expecting and wanted just less than 200 franchises throughout the country. Mrs. Webb Roberts said there was one in downtown Chicago, one in Downers Grove, and potentially an open point towards the Orland area; adding that as far as going south and east the closest Genesis facility would be in Carmel and in Lafayette. Mrs. Webb Roberts went on to say that there was a wide service area and are already seeing a huge increase in service business because they were dwindling down the people who have not committed to build these facilities because of cost and ROI reasons. Mrs. Webb Roberts said that one of the perks of buying with Genesis is that you would receive complementary valet for servicing, with valets running up to 100 miles to get the vehicles and service them. Mr. Jarvis said that would be an expense in itself. Mrs. Webb Roberts stated that yes, but they had received very positive feedback and customers enjoy it. Mr. Kouros clarified that the proposed dealership would be east of Ziegler and Clarendale of Schererville. Mr. Jarvis suggested that an acceleration and deceleration lane be added so people could slow down coming in from U.S. 30 and that they would need to talk to INDOT about that. Mr. Jarvis went on to say that he believed it would be tough otherwise trying to turn into there. Mrs. Webb Roberts stated that it was the same entrance that Ziegler used. Mr. Jarvis replied that he was concerned with both dealerships and to talk with them and possibly share it. Mr. Gorman stated that it currently already exists and that you would go right to Genesis and left to Ziegler. Mr. Immig asked if the underground sewers seep into the ground. Mr. Ryan Torrenga responded that the underground detention had the capability to release some via aggregate that is underneath the half-moon shaped plastic container, but the main source of release would be a connection to release. Mr. Torrenga added that it could have a controlled release into existing storm system or the roadside swale along U.S. 30, but there would be some seepage into the ground or it can be designed to not seep at all. Mr. Torrenga went on to say that it was too early in the design to know how the release would happen and what kind of regulations would need to be met; typically it was all through a release point and a release into the ground is very minimal. Mr. Jarvis asked when they had planned to come in for Primary Approval. Mrs. Webb Roberts replied they hoped to come back as soon as possible.

#### D. Illiana Redevelopment

General Location: 7211 U.S. 30

Petitioner(s): Town of Schererville – James M. Gorman, Town Manager  
Reardon Consulting Services – Pat Reardon

Request: Site Redevelopment

Mr. Pat Reardon from Reardon Consulting Services showed a slide presentation on different project phases that had previously been presented to the Town Council. Mr. Reardon stated that he had met with various departments in Town such as Parks and Public Works to discuss future plans and ideas for the redevelopment of the Illiana Property. Mr. Reardon added that he had also met with different organizations and local communities with similar public spaces. Mr. Reardon said that he will be interviewing different design firms for plans to meet monthly with Town Staff and Elected Officials for project updates.

**III. Adjournment**

There being no further business, this meeting was adjourned at 7:12 P.M.