

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
VILLAGE OF NEW LENOX PLAN COMMISSION

Held in the New Lenox Village Hall, 1 Veterans Parkway

Tuesday, February 17, 2015 7:00 p.m.

#15-2-B

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Village of New Lenox Plan Commission was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairman Mark Muehlnickel.

Chairman Muehlnickel led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call, the following were present: Chairman Mark Muehlnickel, Commissioners Annette Boyd, Terry Schultz and Rob Moss.

The following were absent: Commissioners Gary Berner, John Kuchler and Joan Byerley.

Mr. Muehlnickel announced there was a quorum present for this meeting.

Also present were Community Development Director Robin Ellis, Senior Planner Jeff Smith, Planner Jennifer Neubauer and Secretary Patricia Hansen.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF A REGULAR PLAN COMMISSION MEETING OF FEBRUARY 3, 2015

A motion was made by Commissioner Boyd and seconded by Commissioner Moss to approve the February 3, 2015 minutes as presented, with Commissioner Schultz abstaining. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

REQUEST FOR COUNTY SPECIAL USE - CONTINUANCE

NR1 Transport, Inc.

14.62 acres located at 10 S. Gougar Road

Michael Hansen, Petitioner

Mr. Tom Osterberger began by stating he is one of the attorneys for the applicant. He explained that Mike Hansen is running late, but should be arriving soon. It is his understanding that the traffic consultants have additional information to share with the Plan Commission.

Mr. Bill Grieve, Senior Transportation Engineer with Gewalt-Hamilton, said that his firm has worked very hard to address the questions that have been brought up over the past several weeks. He explained that they have put together a PowerPoint presentation that will hopefully answer some of these questions.

Ms. Amanda Larson of Gewalt-Hamilton referenced the PowerPoint presentation explaining that the Project Traffic Characteristics indicate the trips that will occur based on trucks (in this case). She said that in 2015, there will be 18 employees, generating 37 trucks and 41 trailers. Ms. Larson said there will be 20 trips generated in the morning that will include both entering and exiting. In the evening she said there will be 21 trips, and throughout the day a total of 86 trips. Mr. Grieve indicated that these numbers are new and not the same as those included in the original report. He also said that a series of traffic counts were done at the existing facility tallying the number of trucks entering and exiting the site. Mr. Grieve said that although they may have 37 trucks and 41 trailers, they are on the road the majority of the time.

Ms. Larson said that as discussed previously, trucks will be prohibited from exiting between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Also, she advised that trucks will not be allowed to enter or exit to the north on Gougar Road. Mr. Grieve noted that this will not only benefit school traffic, but background traffic as well.

In looking at 2035 traffic, Ms. Larson said it is anticipated that there will be about 35 employees, 60 trucks, and 70 trailers. She said this will generate 38 trips in the morning, 39 trips in the evening, and 162 trips over the course of the day. Ms. Larson noted that in 2035, trucks will continue to be prohibited from exiting from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. She noted that trucks will be restricted from entering or exiting to the north on Gougar Road.

Regarding other possible uses on the site, Ms. Larson said they have looked at other uses that could occupy a site such as this. She said these uses could generate significantly more trips in the morning, evening, and throughout the day. Mr. Grieve looked at the possibility of a grocery store on the site and said this type of use could generate about 40 deliveries per day, which is a large number in comparison to what NR1 Transport is expected to do. He said any other use for the property will most likely generate more traffic than NR1 Transport.

After four days of existing traffic counts, on average, Ms. Larson said trucks accounted for 5.65% of traffic using the Gougar Road and Route 30 intersection. In the morning, 118 out of 2,244 vehicles accounted for truck traffic; in the evening, 60 out of 2,620 vehicles accounted for truck traffic. She said currently, trucks account for a low percentage of traffic at this intersection. Ms. Larson said that in looking at 2015 traffic, NR1 anticipated they will add 5 new trucks during the a.m. peak hour, which is 0.22 percent of the vehicles traveling through the intersection, and in the evening, it is anticipated they will add 6 new trucks, or 0.23 percent of the vehicles traveling through the intersection. She noted that these are "entering trucks only"

because trucks will be prohibited from exiting during the a.m. and p.m. peak hours.

Ms. Larson continued by stating they have looked at the 2035 traffic, and NR1 is anticipating an additional 9 trucks in the morning peak, which is 0.32 percent of the anticipated 2035 traffic, and in the evening 10 trucks, which is 0.30 percent, entering trucks only. She said they have taken these results and added them to their synchro model to determine the results. Ms. Larson said they have adjusted the traffic signal timings, as was discussed previously, and in order to help relieve congestion after the clear out phase (immediately after a train cycle occurs), the phases were extended in order to allow the southbound queue to clear. With these changes to the signal timings, the delay in the morning decreased 0.2 seconds from the existing traffic, maintaining its Level of Service (LOS) "E". In the evening, she said the delay increases 0.3 seconds from the existing traffic, maintaining its existing LOS "E".

Mr. Grieve noted that his company has a contract with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for signal coordination and timing, and that one of their employees went to the intersection of Route 30 and Gougar Road to check out the box, and subsequently IDOT adjusted the signal on the fly. He said they initially thought it was important to adjust the official traffic signal timings, but determined that when there is a train event of 55 seconds and the gates are down, the clear-out cycle allowing southbound traffic to clear-out before the red light hit was not long enough. Mr. Grieve explained that as a result, it took two or three additional traffic signal cycles to get back to normal and by that time, there was a possibility of another train going through. He said that by increasing the clear out cycle, from 35 to 50 seconds for southbound Gougar Road and 25 to 30 seconds for the westbound Route 30 left-turn lane will significantly improve the intersection. Mr. Grieve noted that these signal timing changes are now in play.

Ms. Larson said they have also looked at the 2035 synchro model and used the updated signal timings with the extended clear-out phase for the southbound Gougar Road and the westbound Route 30 left turn. She stated they used the preferred geometry based upon Will County's improvement plan, and with the additional lanes, the delay decreases by 5.1 seconds from the existing traffic and the LOS improves to a "D". Ms. Larson pointed out that in the p.m., the delay decreases by 11.5 seconds from the existing traffic and the service improves to a LOS "D" as well. Mr. Grieve added that the plan for the intersection for the long-range preferred concept provides extra through lanes on Gougar Road as well as dual left turn lanes all the way around. Although there is no financing for these recommended improvements at the present time, he said it is a long range plan no different than the 2035 traffic projections, which is also a long range plan.

With regard to enforcement, Ms. Larson said there will be a gated entrance and exit as well as a guardhouse. She said every truck will include a GPS unit, and this can prevent a vehicle from starting. Mr. Grieve said NR1 always had a strong educational program to make sure everyone understands the rules.

Ms. Larson addressed the Fox River Grove accident involving a bus and a train and said that as a result of the accident, there was a thorough review done by the National Transportation Safety Board. She said they looked at intersections that have a close train tracks and traffic signal, which requires the train signal and traffic signal are interconnected. Ms. Larson said as a result of this investigation the pavement markings were increased and the signal timings were improved, enhancing the clear-out phase so that traffic could get through. She said the location of the signal sensors has been improved, and school busses are now required to stop at the tracks and open their doors to look and listen for trains before they can proceed.

Ms. Larson concluded by stating the NR1 transport traffic can be accommodated by the adjacent roadway system and will not create any adverse effects in either 2015 or 2035. With strong enforcement and the peak period exit prohibitions agreed to by NR1, she said the impact would be less than any other land use would create.

Commissioner Boyd asked if her understanding that they actually improved the performance of that intersection with the studies they did and in speaking with IDOT is correct. Mr. Grieve replied that this is correct. Ms. Boyd said she has been looking at the materials provided to the Plan Commission about the Fox River Grove train/bus accident, and that the accident was the result of a judgment problem on the part of the bus driver. She explained that when the driver moved the bus forward, she was not aware that the bus did not clear the tracks. Ms. Boyd said the materials indicate that the light turned green six seconds prior to the accident, but her attention was directed to the activities of the kids inside the bus. Ms. Boyd advised that the accident was not the result of anything but the driver's judgment and that while it was a tragedy, she is not certain that it was the result of a problematic intersection; rather that the intersections are similar.

Mr. Muehlnickel asked if the model is sophisticated enough to differentiate between trucks that are 60 ft. in length, and cars that are 20 ft. in length. Ms. Larson said the synchro model knows the dimensions of cars and trucks, and it takes this information into account.

Commissioner Boyd asked if most trucks are on the road by 5:00 a.m. Mr. Grieve replied that the hours of operation will be from 5:00 a.m. through the later part of the evening. He said some drivers like to get on the road immediately, but others stagger their times going in and out of the facility.

Ms. Maureen Harton, in-house counsel for Providence High School commented on the recent death of a Lincolnway Central student that occurred during non-peak traffic times, not at the Route 30/Gougar Road intersection, but on Route 30. She said the last thing this community needs is more trucks on Route 30.

Community Development Director Robin Ellis explained that staff received the traffic study on Friday afternoon. She said Senior Planner Jeff Smith was out of the office that day and the Village Hall was closed the following Monday so there has been limited time to look at the study. Ms. Ellis reported that a big assumption that was made were the anticipated future improvements of all legs of the Gougar Road and Route 30 intersection. She questioned the traffic impacts if these improvements are not made. Mr. Grieve replied that if these improvements do not take place, the delays will continue to increase. He pointed out that the estimated 2035 traffic numbers were provided by CMAP that encompassed projections to the year 2040. Mr. Grieve said they took those projections and worked back. He noted that some of the approaches to the intersection are anticipated to grow by leaps and bounds, especially Gougar Road south of Route 30.

Ms. Ellis stated that none of the roads are Village roads and referred to how long it took for the State to fund the widening of Route 30 through the east part of town. She said the Route 30/I-80 interchanges are on the books to be upgraded at some point, but noted that the project is not funded at this time. Ms. Ellis said she is hesitant to feel comfortable with the findings of the traffic study on the assumption that the State and/or the County is going to be able to fund these intersection improvements that are out of the control of the Village. Mr. Grieve agreed, stating that this would pertain to anything that would occupy the site, and reiterated that the NR1 Transport facility would generate much less traffic than just about anything else that could go on this site.

Ms. Ellis referred to a particular table in the PowerPoint presentation and said that back in August when the report was submitted to Will County, it indicated there would be initially 10 trucks per day, with up to 25 trucks per day over a 20-year period. She said it appears now to be 44 trucks initially and 78 trucks per day at ultimate build-out, and asked if this is correct. Mr. Grieve said this is correct and went on to say that there was a lot of confusion at the beginning of the process. For this exercise, Mr. Grieve said they attempted to get as much detailed information as possible from the owners and operators of the company. Ms. Larson explained that 78 trucks do not necessarily equate to two trucks, pointing out that one truck can equal two trips in and out.

Regarding the 2030 traffic projections, Ms. Ellis asked if there was a basis for assigning the same percentage of trucks, buses, and cars as exist today to the 2035 projections. Ms. Larson replied that she took the CMAP projections and increased the total number of vehicles traveling through the intersection. In order to keep the same number of trucks, buses, and cars, she said she increased the number of trucks and buses to keep that same percentage. Ms. Ellis asked if there was an analysis that may have indicated that trucks will increase proportionately more or less than cars, based on the projected land uses in that area. Mr. Grieve said CMAP projections look at the overall numbers as well as land use travel patterns. He reported that as overall traffic increases, the number of trucks will also increase. Ms. Ellis asked for a clarification as to

whether the study broke down the numbers by types of vehicles. Mr. Grieve answered that the numbers provided were the result of total traffic only.

Ms. Ellis said the level of service and impacts to the north leg of the intersection have been discussed in great detail, but asked what will happen to the northbound leg. She said 15 more seconds have been taken off the southbound traffic and 5 seconds for westbound left turns resulting in 20 additional seconds. Mr. Grieve explained that this is the clear-out cycle that occurs for one cycle after a train passes across the intersection. He said that subsequent to that cycle, it reverts back to the typical traffic signal cycle pattern until the next train event. Mr. Grieve said that previously, the clear-out cycle was not long enough resulting in southbound traffic becoming bottled up, particularly the westbound left. Based on the results, Ms. Larson reported that with the 50th percentile queue, adding the NR1 traffic and considering the signal adjustment, the northbound queue increases by 5 feet. She pointed out that this increase is less than a 20 foot car.

At the meeting two weeks ago, Mr. Muehlnickel said there was discussion about a proposal that needed approval in order to change the timing of the light at the intersection. He asked if the traffic signal adjustment was in effect for 100% of the time, or only when a train passes. Ms. Larson explained that the way that the signal timing works is that it is a full system whether a train is approaching or not. She said they were requesting approval in order to adjust the signal in order to make the intersection function better. Ms. Larson went on to say that originally, in they thought they would be looking at adjusting the signals for non-train events, but realized the problem was occurring immediately following a train event because it took three to five signal cycles in order to return the intersection to the traffic conditions that existed prior to the train event. She said it was determined that the best solution would be to change the clear-out phase that would result in the intersection staying in sync.

Regarding northbound traffic, Mr. Muehlnickel asked if the study takes into consideration future land uses of the land south of Gougar Road. Ms. Larson said the 2035 projections they used for their numbers took into account an increase. She said CMAP looks at vacant land and the projected land uses, and bump the numbers up accordingly.

Mr. Muehlnickel asked for additional information about truck repair. Attorney Mike Hansen explained that the truck repair aspect of the business pertains to the company's fleet only.

Mr. Muehlnickel said they have done their homework as far as the traffic study goes, but the intersection remains a LOS "E", noting that they have made improvements. He questioned whether or not this is the highest and best use of the land, adding that sometimes "vacant" can be the highest and best use of property. He said that although this property is not in the Village, it is one of the entry points into the Village. Ms. Boyd advised that "vacant" is not on the table for consideration. She said there is a proposal currently in front of the Plan Commission, and

“vacant” is not an option. Mr. Muehlnickel said they have presented a number of potential uses for the property, but sometimes leaving property vacant can be the best use of property. Ms. Boyd explained anything that is put in that location will generate traffic. She said they are offering to limit traffic and hours of operation. Additionally, she said they realized there was a problem and worked with IDOT to solve the problem. Ms. Boyd advised that if someone wants the property to remain vacant, she suggested they buy it for that purpose. She said she would prefer that the Village work with the petitioner rather than file an objection, noting that it is a difficult piece of property.

Mr. Muehlnickel asked Mr. Moss if he had any questions or comments. He had none. Mr. Muehlnickel asked Mr. Schultz if he had any questions or comments. Mr. Schultz said he agreed with Ms. Boyd.

Mr. Muehlnickel asked for a motion to recommend to the Village Board that an objection be filed against this County Special Use request for the proposed truck terminal and truck repair business to be located at 10 S. Gougar Road.

A motion was made by Commissioner Moss to recommend to the Village Board that an objection be filed against this County Special Use request for the proposed truck terminal and truck repair business to be located at 10 S. Gougar Road. The motion died, due to the lack of a second.

Mr. Muehlnickel asked for a motion to recommend to the Village Board that no objection be filed against this County Special Use for the proposed truck terminal and truck repair business to be located at 10 S. Gougar Road.

A motion was made by Commissioner Boyd and seconded by Mr. Schultz to recommend to the Village Board that no objection be filed against this County Special Use for the proposed truck terminal and truck repair business to be located at 10 S. Gougar Road.

Upon roll call, the vote was:

AYES: - Commissioners Boyd, Schultz

NAYS: - Commissioner Moss, Chairman Muehlnickel

Due to a tie vote, there was not an official Plan Commission recommendation to the Village Board.

Ms. Ellis said this request will go before the Village Board on Monday night. Mr. Muehlnickel asked if this will give Staff sufficient time to review the revised traffic study. Mr. Hansen

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approached the dais and requested that he would prefer that this request go before the Village Board on Monday, March 9th. Ms. Ellis asked Mr. Hansen when the County is going to hear the request. Mr. Hansen advised that today, the County continued their request.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Senior Planner Jeff Smith advised that there will not be a meeting on March 3, 2015. She said the next Plan Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2015.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Plan Commission at this time, a motion was made by Commissioner Boyd and seconded by Commissioner Schultz to adjourn. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Patricia Hansen – Senior Administrative Secretary