Kevin M. Todd, AICP

From: Joseph Plankis <jplankis@gotown.net>
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2012 5:54 PM
To: APC; Council Members; Andy Cook; Matt Skelton; Kevin M. Todd, AICP; Stumpf, Bryan
Cc: Joe O'Connell; Joe Plankis; Robert P Smith II; Robin Barbera; Ron Rothrock; Settle John; Susan Stephens; Tammie Gabriel
Subject: Harmony PUD District
Attachments: President's letter April 2012.doc; Letter to APC & others 5-7-12.doc

All concerned,

I do plan to speak at tonight's APC meeting regarding the Harmony PUD rezone petition. However, there is quite a lot of background information that you should all be aware of, but since I am limited as to my speaking time at the meeting, this will give you some time to review my comments and be able to ask questions at the meeting or via email or by phone at a later time.

As it stands now, the Centennial HOA Board is NOT in favor of this petition to rezone the property in question. I will discuss our position in more detail at the Public Hearing. In the meantime, if anyone has a need to contact me before the meeting, please contact me on my cell phone.

Joe

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER-APRIL 2012

As I write this letter, we are enjoying some terrific weather with temperatures in the high seventies and low eighties, and in fact we have now broken the high temperature records for four days in a row.

Just as with the weather, changes are always taking place in our country, our state, and in our community. As you read this, you may already be aware of a proposal that is coming forward to the Westfield City Council.

With the unfortunate demise of various Estridge Companies, the property west of Ditch Road is now in the hands of new owners. A project named Harmony will be presented to the City Council on April 9th. Representatives of the developer held a communication meeting for Centennial residents and other residents living along 156th street. The presenters were Bryan Stumpf of American Structurepoint Inc., and Rick Mildner of Ram Associates, based in Atlanta.

As a general overview, the development is 277 acres, about 2/3 the size of Centennial. The boundaries of Harmony are 146th street on the south, running about ¼ of a mile from Ditch road to the west, then north to 151st street, then west about ½ mile to the western boundary of the development and then basically north to 156th street, east to Ditch and back south along the west side of Ditch Road to 146th street.

At the same time, the Hamilton County Highway Department is planning to expand 146th street to four lanes from two lanes over the next two years from Springmill to just barely west of Ditch. When 146th reaches the area just west of the main Centennial South pond on 146th street, the road will then curve north onto the current farm that is just west of the pond. The county will build a roundabout on Ditch Road approximately 100-200 feet north of the current intersection of 146th and Ditch. The upgrade of 146th street to four lanes will stop at the western edge of the new roundabout. The balance of the 146thstreet upgrade to four lanes to the Boone County line will be done at a later date when County funds are available. The developers are working to coordinate their proposed project with the County Highway department.

The developers' plans call for a second roundabout to be built at the current Ditch Road entrance to Centennial South. That roundabout will have five roads feeding the roundabout: two for north and south Ditch, one for entering Centennial South, and two roads with one going southwest into a mixed use area in Harmony and o second road going northwest into the proposed residential area of Harmony. They also plan to curve 151st street to the north so that it meets up with the entrance to Centennial at Bridgeport, eliminating a traffic hazard. The plans call for just over 700 homes in Harmony. Half of the homes would be front load(garage in the front of the home), while half would be rear load (garage in the rear, loaded from an alley). The proposed mixed use area, at the northwest corner of Ditch and the new 146th street roundabout would be a commercial area with approximately 158,000 square feet of commercial space. It would include a grocery store, two banks, several sit down restaurants and a small office or medical building. Between the new and old 146th Streets a gas station and convenience store is proposed. West of the commercial area would be 260-270 upscale apartments, the smallest being 650 Square feet in size. Phase 1 would be the commercial area along with the new homes between the commercial area and 151st street.

The developers consider the project to be an upscale, intergenerational mix of homes with high architectural standards that builders would have to meet. There would be at least four builders building homes in the project and they would have to meet a minimum of 8 of the 15 standards the developer would set before they could build the homes. No vinyl siding would be allowed; only Hardiplank, brick, and stone for outside building wall materials. They would also provide additional property to the City on the west side of Ditch for Ditch to be widened to meet Thoroughfare Plan requirements for a secondary arterial road. That would move the homes along the west side of Ditch a considerable distance from homes in Centennial. They also stressed that the entrances to the development, including the roundabout on Ditch would all be landscaped to very high standards. They have plans for a recreation center with a pool and that would be built in Phase 1. They anticipate it will be an eight to ten year build out for the development.

These are just general comments from notes I had taken from the meeting that was held on 3/12/12 at the Centennial Bible Church. As I indicated, a number of residents from various locations, including Centennial were invited to the meeting. Since it was not an official, noticed meeting, all homeowners did not have to be notified at this time. The developers are required to notify all property owners within 600 feet of their property when the petition goes before the Advisory Plan Commission at a later date.

Nothing in this letter should indicate anything about any board member's position regarding this development. It is only a report on what was presented by the developer's representatives. Their petition to the City would be a rezone of the property. It should be noted that the current Comprehensive Land Use Plan that was passed by the Council in 2007 does not have any commercial property at the intersection of 146th and Ditch Road. The Land Use Plan calls for commercial development at 146th and Towne Road which is a Primary Arterial. All this can ultimately be changed by a vote of the Advisory Plan Commission and the City Council.

The developers indicated that they will make a formal presentation to the City Council at their April 9th meeting. If you are interested in learning more about the project, that would be your first opportunity to do so. The meeting would be held at City Hall at 130 Penn Street in Downtown Westfield at 7PM. I would suggest getting there early and taking a seat on the west side of the room for the best view of the presentation. You can check the city website at www.westfield.in.gov on the Friday before the April 9th meeting to obtain an agenda for that meeting.

May 7, 2012

To: Westfield APC Commissioners, Mayor Andy Cook, City Councilors, Matt Skelton, Kevin Todd, Centennial HOA Board Members
From: Joe Plankis, President, Centennial Home Owners Association

While I will address a number of issues regarding the Harmony development at the APC meeting this evening, there are quite a few details that I would like to present that will not fit in within the time frame allowed at the public hearing. That background and other comments follow in this document.

Timeline and discussions regarding Harmony:

1. There was a "neighborhood" meeting held at the Centennial Bible Church (it was actually held on March 12th, not the 13th), same night as the City Council meeting, so our elected representatives were not able to attend. Evidently Bryan Stumpf directly invited a number of Centennial residents as well as land owners on the perimeter of their development. There was never any attempt made to contact any of the Centennial HOA Board members about the meeting, nor was a request made to notify residents of Centennial through our general email system which would reach over 80% of our owners or more than 800 residents. Bryan indicated to me that they did send out a letter to the Board of Centennial South, which they really did not have a board since it was still controlled by the developer and everyone who was or had been employed by Estridge and had any knowledge of Centennial and Centennial South would know there was not a functioning board. That was also the time frame where Centennial South LLC was being merged into Centennial HOA. The Centennial HOA Board learned of the meeting from a resident who had been contacted about the planned meeting. This was all discussed by me with Bryan on March 12th.
2. I then wrote a President's letter for the April issue of the Changing Times, the monthly newsletter for Centennial Residents. (**Copy of President's letter attached with the email that goes along with this document.)**
3. Bryan Stumpf then requested to meet with me on Friday, April 27th to discuss the project further. A summary of the meeting follows bellow this timeline. The summary is in bolded Black, while some additional comments are in Red.
4. As part of my role as President of the Westfield Rédevelopment Commission, I meet with Mayor Cook quarterly to discuss updates regarding the community. That meeting happened to fall just prior to my meeting with Bryan Stumpf and I provided Mayor Cook with the feedback of my discussion with Bryan. Report follows:

Andy,
As a follow-up to our discussion last week, I did meet with Bryan on Friday morning. I told him that besides not complying with the Westfield Comprehensive Land Use Plan as it currently stands, I also laid out a number of concerns of our Centennial HOA Board:

1) Concerns about flooding on the NW corner of 146th and Ditch since that is the lowest elevation point for Harmony. Ditch Road always floods currently when there are heavy rains. He states that there is a 54" drain crossing the northern portion of the open land on the NE corner that drains into the Centennial retention pond, then out of the pond via the creek that flows out of Centennial along the border of Centennial South and Merrimack. Can someone verify the size and location of the drainage system in that area for us and will it be adequate? How far down is the water table in the proposed commercial area? Bryan states that their design will flow all of the storm water from the commercial area into the nearest new pond they plan to build on the west side of Ditch Road, then through Centennial pond and the 54" drain.

2) Concerns about possible water pollution from the gas station with heavy rains and air pollution through venting with the gas station and the heavy auto traffic, not to mention the light pollution the gas station and fast food restaurant would cause. Any pollutants that would contaminate the runoff would, according to Bryan's design description, would wind up in the Centennial retention pond and then travel into the drainage system flowing out of Centennial and Merrimac.

3) Having a solid wall of the backs of homes on the west side of Ditch Road is unacceptable. Bryan stated that they will donate land for the future expansion of Ditch Road to meet the standards of a secondary arterial and they will also provide screening of Harmony from Ditch Road and Centennial. I suggested the use of a frontage road on the west side of Ditch in Harmony, similar to what is at 141st and Towne Road in Carmel where the homes are facing Towne Road. This suggestion was rejected by Bryan due to difficulty in selling those homes with views of two streets, the frontage Road and Ditch Road. On further thought since our meeting, the use of a frontage road evidently did not stop the sale of some very expensive homes in Carmel under similar circumstances.

The second suggestion I made was to have ALL homes along Ditch be designed with full brick on the ends of the homes facing Ditch and incorporate the use of other architectural features to improve the appearance of the homes facing Ditch. For example, different elevations for those homes could be designed so there is significant variety visually, both to passing travelers and our Centennial residents. Regardless of my comments or suggestions, this is a design issue that should be addressed by land use planning professionals for a solution before any consideration for approval of the petition.

One item that we did not discuss at our meeting is the alignment of 151st and Bridgeport as part of this petition. I would suggest that a roundabout be considered upfront for that location, with the roadway shifted to the west to minimize any taking of the Bridgeport entrance to Centennial. It could be designed similar to the roundabout at 141st and Springmill Road which is offset to the west, yet is very attractive and functional. The Bridgeport entrance is very busy, especially in the morning and evening and with 700 more homes in Harmony and whatever else is built to the west of Harmony in the future, that consideration should be part of the current planning process.

4) We also have major concerns with the traffic patterns the new roads and roundabouts would create, not to mention who is going to pay for the road upgrades they have in their plan, as well as who will pay for the westward extension of 146th street beyond the

roundabout at Ditch that appears to be key to their success for the commercial and apartment area. The City Council should not consider this rezone petition, especially with the apartments, until Union Street Flats is fully under construction.

5) The argument that the gas station and the fast food restaurant will be perceived to be in Carmel like the Matthew 25 Center is on the OLMC campus is not valid. I drove the curb lane going east on 146th and the Center is South of the "old" roadway, other that some small part of the lawn perhaps, which may be a short distance into Westfield. The fact remains, for the reasons stated above, the gas station is still on the NW corner of 146th and Ditch, in Westfield within the line of site of Centennial Residents and with all its associated issues.

I did ask Bryan to have a meeting with the residents of Centennial BEFORE their petition goes before the Advisory Plan Commission on May 7th for the public hearing, so the residents have an opportunity to understand the project as well as have an opportunity to give them input. He will check with his client on my request and get back to me. We have the ability to send a blast email to well over 800 of our residents to tell them about the meeting, even if it was on short notice. It could be held at Centennial Bible Church, depending on which night of the week it would be. **Note: I never received any feedback from Bryan regarding my request for a presentation to Centennial residents. Lack of ANY feedback was disappointing to say the least.**

I told Bryan that unless that meeting is held next week and we can have feedback from a large number of our residents at that presentation, I will speak against the petition on behalf of our community, at the APC meeting on May 7th. There are far too many unanswered questions regarding Harmony and it's affect on Centennial residents to do anything different at this point in time.

We do understand the need to add commercial AV to the tax base for Westfield, and for a host of good reasons. However, as you said during the development of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan which we approved in 2007 as Town Council members, and what you and I have stated publicly many times since, "We know development is coming, but we want it to be quality and in the right location."

Sanford D. Horn
1388 Somerville Drive
Westfield, IN 46074

Members of the Plan Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you regarding my concerns pertaining to this construction project by the petitioner JR Farmer Harmony, LLC.

I moved to Westfield one year ago from Alexandria, VA, a busy, thriving DC-area city with more traffic and construction than imaginable or that should be endured by anyone.

I now find myself face to face with this huge construction proposal, literally, as my home on the corner of Somerville and Ditch is ground zero for this project. The peace and quiet currently enjoyed by me and my neighbors will be permeated by noise, construction, garbage, pollution, traffic, street blockages and possibly even crime and property damage for the next eight to 10 years – the length of this five-phase project according to Bryan Stumpf, of American Structurepoint, at the presentation he gave at the Centennial Bible Church a couple months ago.

The values of our homes are in jeopardy as is the idyllic sense of a quiet Midwest American neighborhood. Additionally, our quality of life will be adversely affected due to the aforementioned disruptions with no compensation.

While I do not begrudge any honest person or company the opportunity to earn as much money as possible – after all, what kind of a capitalist would I be – I just prefer they take their banks, stores and smelly gas station somewhere else. All of those businesses are already within close proximity.

I will continue to be an outspoken opponent of the Harmony construction project in word and deed – orally and in my columns.

I offer thanks to Centennial HOA President Joe Plankis for his work on this important issue, as well as City Councilman John Dipple for his leadership.

Thank you.