

MINUTES
VILLAGE OF HINSDALE
DOWNTOWN LAND PLANNING TASK FORCE
THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2008
MEMORIAL HALL
8:00 A.M.

Chairman Orlor called the meeting to order at 8:06 A.M. Thursday, March 13, 2008, at Memorial Hall, 19 East Chicago Avenue, Hinsdale, Illinois.

PRESENT: Chairman Vic Orlor, Jeanie Janes, Kevin Hanrahan, David Bossy, Nickie Giannopoulos, David Friedman, Karl Weber

ABSENT: Philip Moriarty, Susan Dunphy

ALSO PRESENT: Tim Bleuher, Director of Community Development, Rita DuChateau, Director of Communications District 181

Discussion

Chairman Orlor opened the meeting by asking members of the task force as to what they interpreted from discussions with members of the surrounding neighborhood. David Friedman brought up the point that the residents could not get to a “what if” discussion regarding the possibility of the middle school moving from its current location. Other members agreed. Jeanie Janes noted that most residents liked the current school location because it provided safety for the children attending and was a good buffer to the downtown. David Bossy mentioned that parking seemed to be an issue of concern with residents in the downtown area and that any development scenario would have to aid in alleviating this dilemma. Discussion amongst the group then followed regarding the total number of parking spaces currently located on the property and costs relating to developing an underground an at-grade parking structure. The whole group agreed that there was a lot of energy around the existing greenspace and the fact that residents liked to abut the existing playing fields. David Friedman mentioned that people did not seem opposed to additional commercial development which would back up to existing businesses along First Street.

Friedman asked Janes, as a downtown business representative, if the downtown benefited from having the middle school in close proximity. Janes responded that it mostly benefited from parents picking up and dropping off their children and than shopping the downtown stores. Janes also mentioned that the children coming into the downtown after school hours and hanging out was more a negative impact on the downtown. Friedman said that kids roaming the downtown could have a negative influence on visitors. Nickie Giannopoulos stated that parents liked the fact that their children had a central gathering place where they could interact with one another in safety.

Kevin Hanrahan noted that the middle school task force is now focusing on needed renovations to the existing school and that if the school did move residents would want at least a green buffer to whatever development scenario plays out. Vic Orlor stated that the existing greenspace today constitutes eighteen single-family lots if developed at around seven-hundred and fifty thousand dollars per lot. He went on to note that it would be costly to the Village to purchase the existing greenspace and that would have to go to a referendum.

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Giannopoulos asked Hanrahan what the lifetime of the school approximately is. Hanrahan responded by stating that Madison school is eighty-years old with the necessary renovations undertaken.

David Bossy asked Chairman Orlor to restate the mission of the task force. Orlor stated that if the school district did move the middle school the group would provide direction to maximize the land in order to benefit taxpayers but maximize at no cost to the abutting neighbors. If the district decided to focus on the existing school with respect to renovations, the task force would disband. Bossy responded by stating that the group owed it to residents to maximize on ideas generated from the group. Bossy displayed to the larger group a schematic site plan which transitioned in intensity from Third Street with single-family homes, retail backing onto businesses along First Street and senior housing above a parking garage screened from view on all sides. Bossy went on to say that type of downtown development is nationally recognized and is roughly a sixty-million dollar development. Bossy offered the services of architects that he has on hand to draw up some other development scenarios. Orlor noted to the rest of the group that if the school did move, than the group and larger community would put out a request for proposals in order for developers to submit bids. He went on to say that he would like the group to come up with about five different development scenarios.

Giannopoulos stated that it appeared that, overall, residents enjoyed the location of the school and its added charm to the downtown. Orlor mentioned that the group has not heard of any positive reaction to the middle school moving. Hanrahan noted that while people like to hear options, discussion has not gone beyond the here and now although the discussion has been helpful and insightful to the middle school task force.

Bossy asked Hanrahan how much it would cost to renovate the existing school. Hanrahan responded by stating that it would cost five to six million dollars in renovations and that it cost the district eighteen million to build the Clarendon Hills school. Vic Orlor noted that the current school provides one-hundred and twenty square feet per student and that the state wants one-hundred and eighty square feet per student.

Chairman Orlor lastly noted that the group was going to pause in moving forward to allow the middle school task force to catch up. He said that the group would meet with downtown retailers on April 3rd. He encouraged the group to go on their own and create their own development scenarios based on the feedback that has been received.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tim Bleuher
Community Development Director