

**Village of Deer Park  
Plan Commission Meeting Minutes  
July 10, 2006**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

The Meeting of the Plan Commission of the Village of Deer Park was held on Monday, July 10, 2006, at the Village Office, 23680 W. Cuba Road, in the Village of Deer Park, Lake County and Cook Counties, Illinois.

Chairman Heidtke called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m. Upon roll call, the following were present: Chairman David Heidtke, Commission members Frank Comber, Jan Koe, Bill Koutsis and Eric Lorenz. Commissioner Sandy Schroeder was absent. Other Village Officials present were Administrator Diesen-Dahl and Clerk Pratscher. Chairman Heidtke declared a quorum.

Guests present were: (see attached sign-in sheet).

**PROPOSAL FROM ATIRA HOTELS FOR A HAMPTON INN AND SUITES HOTEL**

Dan Beider, president of Atira Hotels, a hotel development and management company, stated that his company is proposing to build a Hampton Inn and Suites on the Hamilton Partners' property within the Triangle.

Steve Cavanaugh, an architect with DLR Group, showed the Commission schematic drawings of the site plan as well as renderings of the hotel's front and side elevations. He said a landscape plan is not yet complete because the company's main focus this evening was to present the preliminary plan and get commissioners' reactions to the site plan, height of the building and initial design.

Mr. Cavanaugh highlighted the key elements of the plan:

- ◆ The building will be 64,000 square feet; the Village's Planned Development District ordinance calls for a maximum of 80,000 square feet.
- ◆ The building will be oriented 90 degrees to Lake-Cook Road, with the short side of the building facing south toward that road and the main hotel entrance facing east. A porte cochere will extend over the main entrance.
- ◆ The hotel will be four stories with 103 rooms (20% of which will be suites) and a small meeting room. There will be no restaurant on site, but a heat-and-serve continental breakfast will be offered.
- ◆ A one-story building extension housing a pool will extend from the rear of the building. One side of that building will be a glass bank overlooking the wetlands on site.
- ◆ The building will be set back 160 feet from Lake-Cook Road, well beyond the required 100-foot building setback line.
- ◆ Access to the hotel would be from Lake-Cook Road on a yet-to-be-built access road.
- ◆ The building would have a three-color stucco exterior.

In response to commissioner's questions, Mr. Beider and Sanjeev Misra, a principal of Atira Hotels, offered additional details:

- ◆ Atira has developed 35 hotels under 14 brand names. The company does not develop anything but hotels and considers itself a hotelier rather than a developer.
- ◆ Hampton, part of Hilton Hotels, is considered a mid-scale hotel and is Hilton's strongest brand. It is the highest-rated limited-service hotel chain according to J.D. Powers, a market research firm.
- ◆ Atira expects an average occupancy rate of 70% and needs an average of 52% occupancy, based on an average room rate of \$129, to maintain a positive cash flow.
- ◆ The company predicts it will have 30-40 full-time equivalent employees and 3-5 management employees.

Commissioner Koe stated that the Dryvit (stucco) material proposed for the hotel's exterior does not convey an upscale image and would be out of place in the Deer Park Town Center and Office Center surroundings. He noted that all other buildings in the Triangle have brick exteriors. Mr. Beider replied that Hilton would never approve an entirely brick building, but Atira is willing to consider alternate exteriors that would give a more upscale appearance.

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Commissioner Koe also stated that he would like to see an economic impact study, including estimates of expected sales tax revenues. He also said that lighting is a big concern in the Village, and exterior lighting fixtures should avoid any light spillage into neighboring residential areas. In addition, Commissioner Koe stated he would like Atira to create a cross-easement with future nearby office buildings to allow overflow parking in surrounding lots on high-occupancy days.

Chairman Heidtke noted that the Planned Development ordinance specifies a three-story hotel building. Mr. Beider responded that the ordinance also specifies a maximum height of 54 feet. He said the proposed building would have a maximum height of 46 feet and 6 inches, with most of the roofline being 40 feet. The taller portion would hide mechanical equipment on the roof. Mr. Misra noted that a three-story building with the same number of rooms would have to be more massive, eliminating some of the green space that a four-story building preserves.

Chairman Heidtke also stated that he found the proposed exterior unappealing, saying that the floor plan lends itself to a facade and roofline with more architectural interest. He also noted that he would have to closely review the Village's sign ordinance, but he was fairly certain the proposed signage on the hotel would have to be modified.

Commissioner Comber agreed with comments concerning the exterior, stating that he would like more details and architectural articulation as well as the use of more upscale materials. He added that he endorses the idea of four stories as opposed to three because it allows for a greater setback from Lake-Cook Road. In addition, he said that the Village highly values landscaping and he hopes to see extensive landscaping plans at the next meeting.

At this point, Chairman Heidtke took questions from the audience.

Resident John Lahr inquired about the size of the pool, where the company would obtain water to fill it and where it would be drained. Mr. Misra replied that Hilton requires a minimum size of 500 square feet. Water would be obtained from Palatine under the company's water allocation. The pool would be drained only once approximately every five years and would be drained into the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District sewers that will serve the property.

Resident Mary Lahr stated that she thinks the building should face south to minimize the light visible to residents of Rue Vallee. She also said she would prefer a different hotel brand that would be only two stories and less visible to residents. Mr. Beider responded that most of the hotel's interior lights would be off at night while guests were sleeping, and the company has no plans for extensive illumination of the exterior of the building.

Mrs. Lahr also questioned what revenue the hotel will generate for the Village and whether the company will pay for a share of its police protection. Mr. Misra estimated that Village will receive \$40,000-\$50,000 in sales tax, and the hotel will have its own security staff.

Resident Carrie Groeller asked if the pool would be open to the public. Mr. Misra said no.

Resident Richard Chay asked if there would be an eastbound left-hand turn lane from Lake-Cook Road onto the new access road. Mr. Misra replied that such a lane already exists.

Resident Anita Beale inquired about how much traffic the hotel would generate. Mr. Misra replied that 65% of the expected occupants are in the area already. He said, for example, that nearby Continental (formerly Motorola) generates 7,000 occupancy nights per year. He added that the hotel will have a shuttle to local businesses.

Resident Deborah Barry stated there are six hotels within five miles of the proposed hotel and questioned whether additional capacity is needed. She also called the building a big, rectangular box and suggested the developer rethink the exterior. She also suggested the company conduct a focus group with residents to determine what they want and need in terms of a hotel.

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Mr. Beider stated since the Commission seems to support the proposed site plan and building height, the company can now focus on refining the plan. Chairman Heidtke said the Commission will expect detailed drawings and plans when the company comes back, and he urged the company to work on the exterior elevations, lighting and landscaping.

Mr. Beider stated that given the current timing, it is unlikely the company would break ground until spring. Construction would take 11-12 months, he said.

**PLANS FROM CRÈME DE LA CRÈME**

Raymond Gerard, attorney for Crème de la Crème, submitted receipts verifying notice had been sent to residents within 500 feet of the proposed building, as well as an affidavit of publication of notice of a public hearing.

MOTION: by Commissioner Koutsis to temporarily adjourn the regular Plan Commission meeting. Upon a voice vote:

YES: (4)  
NO: (0)  
ABSENT: (1)

Motion carried 4/0/1

MOTION: by Commissioner Koe to open a Public Hearing regarding a petition for an amendment to the Planned Development District ordinance. Upon a voice vote:

YES: (4)  
NO: (0)  
ABSENT: (1)

Motion carried 4/0/1

Mr. Gerard stated that Crème de la Crème, an early learning center, is proposed for Lot 10 in Deer Park Town Center. He said the lot originally was approved for a fitness center, but when the Planned Development District ordinance was amended, no special use was approved for Lot 10. He requested an amendment to that ordinance to allow an early learning center as a permitted use on Lot 10. He also submitted plans for the center and asked the Commission's approval of those plans.

Mr. Gerard gave a brief overview of Crème de la Crème, stating that it will focus on children ages 1 through 5. Educational programs will include math, science, computers and music. There will be recreational areas inside and outside. Approximately 100 children attending the center will be younger than 2½ years; 200 will be older. A staff of 60 is proposed. The Denver-based company has locations nationwide, include at least two others in the Chicago area.

Mr. Gerard, responding to the requirements of a special use permit request, said:

- ◆ The center would be beneficial to the community in this particular location because it is in an area that can easily accommodate the traffic and parking.
- ◆ It doesn't injure the health, safety and welfare of the public because Crème de la Crème adheres to the highest standards of food, education and safety. In addition, the center will not produce any disturbances to the surrounding area, such as noise or odors.
- ◆ The center would not be injurious to nearby properties. On the contrary, Mr. Gerard said, a vacant lot is injurious. He said the proposed facility is not too different from what was originally approved, as it is a service facility with people coming and going.
- ◆ It complies with the zoning standards of the district.

Josh Wheeler, a project engineer from Manhard Consulting, outlined the operation of a typical Crème de la Crème. The center is open 6:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Children are brought into the building by a parent, and each child has an ID required for entrance. Video cameras are located throughout the building. Children move from classroom to classroom on 30-minute rotations. The exterior play area includes a water area with small slides and sprays. A four-foot fence separates the play area for older children from the one for younger children. An eight-foot opaque plastic fence surrounds the entire play area. Children eat lunch and snacks in the classrooms. No food is cooked on site, but there is a kitchen where staff heats and assembles meals.

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In response to questions from commissioners, Mr. Wheeler offered the following comments:

- ◆ Excess land on Lot 10 could be used for additional play areas as the center grows, but no building expansion is planned.
- ◆ Seventy parking spaces are planned.
- ◆ No semi-trucks would be making deliveries at the center.
- ◆ The garbage area is designed so a truck can back up to the containers.
- ◆ The façade of the building consists of split face block, brick and a stucco cornice. A parapet screens all rooftop equipment. A pyramid glass skylight is centered over the atrium of the building. The building would be a maximum height of about 30 feet.
- ◆ Tennis courts are used by students during the day as well as for private tennis lessons offered by the center in the summer.
- ◆ Security cameras will be located in the back play areas but not in the front of the building.

Commissioner Koe noted that the signage on the building would have to be modified to meet codes for retail signs. He also requested that the company provide a feasibility study demonstrating the need for such a center, noting that there is a daycare center just down the street. He also asked for an economic impact study, including support services such as police.

Commissioner Koe noted that Teska, the Village's planning consultant, recommended 96 parking spaces. He asked for numbers from the company's other Chicago area centers for comparison.

Several commissioners expressed concern about the height, opaqueness and material proposed for the fence. They pointed to the nearby daycare center as an example of an acceptable fence. Company representatives cited safety concerns, saying a non-custodial parent could reach over a shorter fence to abduct a child.

Chairman Heidtke noted that Teska's report called for more variation in the façade of the building. He said the proposed material must be of the quality and material of the Deer Park Town Center and pointed out the architectural elements used within the center, such as ornamentals, curves and windows. He also agreed with Commissioner Koe that two signage areas would not be allowed on the building.

Marci Jo Engler, executive director of the Warrenville Crème de la Crème, gave commissioners further details about the interior of the center and answered a variety of operations questions. In response to a variety of concerns about parking, Ms. Engler said parking has never been an issue at her center. She said drop-offs and pick-ups occur throughout the day, and staff shifts are somewhat staggered. She offered to verify the number of parking spaces at her center for comparison.

At this point, Chairman Heidtke took questions from the audience.

Mrs. Groeller stated that her home backs to Quentin Road and she has asked the Village for a 6-foot solid fence to protect her children from that road. She said she was denied. She noted that if the center's fence is approved, a precedent will be set, and the Village will have to allow residents to erect similar fences.

Mrs. Lahr stated that an internet search listed 40 daycare facilities within five miles of the proposed center, adding that she would like to see a needs study before anything is approved. She also stated that the center would generate additional traffic during rush hours and speculated that might cause additional cut-through traffic in the Rue Vallee subdivision.

Mrs. Lahr noted that Village Attorney Scott Hargadon had done work for Crème de la Crème in the past, and she said that could cause a conflict of interest. She also asked what financial benefit the center would bring to the Village. Finally, she criticized the façade of the building, saying it looked like a big box.

Mr. Lahr asked for details about the water play area. Ms. Engler replied that it would be a zero-depth area with recirculating water.

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Mr. Chay asked how much it costs to enroll at Crème de la Crème. Ms. Engler stated that the charge depends on a child's age and the amount of time he or she is at the center. She estimated the cost for an infant attending full-time could be as high as \$1,600 whereas the cost for a part-time older student might be \$500 a month.

Mr. Chay stated that he has three objections to the proposal: 1) Traffic, saying that area roads are not equipped to handle the additional load the center would generate; 2) The fence, citing concerns raised by commissioners and residents; 3) Revenue, saying a revenue-generating business in that space might be more beneficial to the Village.

Mrs. Barry agreed with Mr. Chay, stating that the Village needs additional revenue. She also agreed with criticisms about the buildings façade. Mrs. Barry suggested that the company consider opening the facilities after hours to the public for a fee. She noted that the Village does not have a park district and so lacks a variety of recreational facilities that the center will house. She also asked for specific costs to the Village for a variety of services, such as police and fire protection.

Attorney Gerard responded that any use of Lot 10 will involve some traffic, and the proposed use is not that different from the fitness center originally approved as a use for the site. He also stated that the company will fully address commissioners' concerns about whether there is a need for an early learning center in the area.

MOTION: by Commissioner Koe to close the public hearing. Upon a voice vote:

YES: (4)  
NO: (0)  
ABSENT: (1)

Motion carried 4/0/1

MOTION: by Commissioner Koe to reopen the regular meeting of the Plan Commission. Upon a voice vote:

YES: (4)  
NO: (0)  
ABSENT: (1)

Motion carried 4/0/1

Chairman Heidtke stated that he did not think the Commission had enough information to act on the company's petition to amend the special use ordinance. Other commissioners concurred. Commissioner Koe emphasized that he would like the following issues addressed before the next meeting: building design, traffic impact, fence size and design, building signage, a need analysis, and Village revenue and expense analyses.

Commissioner Koutsis suggested this might be the time for the Plan Commission to decide if it would rather designate Lot 10 for a revenue-generating enterprise, and, if so, to amend the Planned Development District ordinance to reflect that. Other commissioners disagreed that the Commission should take that step without receiving the additional information from Crème de la Crème.

**ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: by Commissioner Comber to adjourn the meeting of the Plan Commission. Upon a voice vote:

YES: (4)  
NO: (0)  
ABSENT: (1)

Motion carried 4/0/1

The regular Meeting of the Plan Commission was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

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David Heidtke, Chairman

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Maureen Pratscher, Village Clerk