

ST. JOHN PLAN COMMISSION  
10955 W. 93<sup>RD</sup> AVENUE, ST. JOHN, INDIANA  
STUDY SESSION – OCTOBER 21, 2015

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mr. Michael Forbes called to order the St. John Plan Commission study session of October 21, 2015, at 7:11 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Roll call was taken by Susan E. Wright, Recording Secretary, with the following Commissioners present: Michael Forbes, Steve Hastings, Steve Kozel, Tom Redar and Derwin Nietzel. Staff members present: Kenn Kraus. Steve Kil was present. Gregory Volk, Town Council liaison, was present.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. HUPPENTHAL/HERMAN/THE PRESERVE --- RE-ZONE  
FROM R-1 TO RC-1 PUD JACK SLAGER ---  
SCHILLING DEVELOPMENT.**

Mr. Forbes called the first order of business before the Board, The Preserve, a rezone from R-1 to RC-1 PUD. He stated the PUD designation that incorporates land conservancy but still retains the R-1 sized home.

Mr. Slager stated he requested placement on the agenda regarding *The Preserve* development. He stated this development is located on White Oak Avenue between 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and 101<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Mr. Slager stated that he wanted to bring the Board up to speed. He stated that the Petitioner is in the process of re-advertising and re-notifying adjacent property owners for the public hearing which will take place for *The Preserves* two weeks from tonight.

Mr. Slager stated that the developer and engineers have worked together to incorporate recommendations of the Board from prior study session meetings, such as a bike path along the development, all single family lots, no commercial or multi-family. He stated the developer will incorporate the following into *The Preserve*: over 100 acres of property preserved as open space, a bike path, tree preservation, enhanced landscaping requirements for the homes and additional trees.

Mr. Slager stated he want to make sure there were no more questions from the Board before the Petitioner goes to the public hearing in two weeks.

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Mr. Forbes asked if there were any questions from the Board. There were no questions. Mr. Forbes stated that hearing no questions, the Board would see Mr. Slager on November 4, 2015.

**B. GREYSTONE --- PRELIMINARY PLAN PRESENTATION --- JACK SLAGER.**

Mr. Forbes moved to the next item on the agenda. He stated that Jack Slager, Schilling Development, was before the Board tonight also representing Greystone for a preliminary plan presentation.

Mr. Slager stated he was before the Board tonight to bring them up to speed on the Greystone project. He stated that the Board probably has not seen this project for almost a year now. Mr. Slager stated that Petitioner for Greystone was before the Board a year ago and started talking about the Greystone project.

Mr. Slager stated that the Greystone project is on Calumet Avenue between 101<sup>st</sup> and 109<sup>th</sup> on both sides of Calumet Avenue. He stated this project would be a combination single-family, multi-family and some commercial. He stated he would be back before the Board on this project over the next several months for study sessions and permission to advertise for rezone. Mr. Slager opined that the developer has a really nice development to go on to this property.

Mr. Slager stated that both of the developments are very large, Planned Unit Developments, so the developer will be coming in with a master plan of the entire property. He stated the parcels will be developed in phases of 40 to 50 lots at a time over a course of 10 to 15 years.

Mr. Slager asked if there were any questions on the project. Mr. Forbes stated that he recalled that this development went on hiatus waiting for the enlargement of Lift Station One. Mr. Forbes stated that the Town is getting very close to starting on the Lift Station One project.

Mr. Forbes asked the Board members if they had any questions on this project. There were no questions from the Board.

**C. RENAISSANCE --- REVIEW OF PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR RENAISSANCE, UNIT 7 --- DOUG TERPSTRA.**

Mr. Forbes moved on to the review of the preliminary development plan

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for Renaissance, Unit 7. Mr. Doug Terpstra was present on behalf of Renaissance, Unit 7.

Mr. Terpstra stated he was developing the last phase of Renaissance and there were two lots redrawn into the plan. He stated there was discussion last month on how the lot lines matched up, or did not match up. Mr. Terpstra had submitted new drawings for discussion on the same.

Mr. Kil placed the drawings on the media screen. Mr. Terpstra stated the drawing he wanted reflected on the screen show the lot lines to the north.

Mr. Terpstra stated that there are nine or ten lots on the northwest end of the subdivision and those lots border a cul de sac from Claremont. He said there was discussion that the lot lines are now not going to match up. Mr. Terpstra stated that the lots were reduced from 100 foot lots to 86 foot lots, and a lot was added a lot in this location from the original plans that were approved.

Mr. Terpstra stated 75 percent of the 179 lots are 80 foot lots depending on where they're at. He stated that there are a few odd-shaped lots that are 100 foot. Mr. Terpstra stated they tried to squeeze one in here. He explained that there is a 42-inch sanitary that runs somewhere in the middle, or just a little bit to the east that could not be dealt with or moved, so a few feet was taken from each lot and an additional lot was added and they were squeezed the other way.

Mr. Terpstra stated that there was discussion last month on why the extra lot was added. He stated that the developer is just trying to recoup some of the costs over the last seven or eight years from being in the development and the economy at the time.

Mr. Terpstra stated that the developer is asking for consideration for what they are doing so they can get done. He stated that this coincides with they have to do on Claremont Avenue. Mr. Terpstra stated he talked to Mr. Kil about the biggest truck that will be used for the snow plow, and the dimensions will be large enough to accommodate the Town's snow plow.

Mr. Terpstra stated that he had discussion with Mr. Kil regarding the bike path that will be going in the front of the subdivision and all of the way across. He stated it would be a six foot concrete path from one end to the other. He stated it would eventually be tied in across the street on the east end.

Mr. Forbes asked the Board if they had any comments. There were no comments from the Board. Mr. Forbes stated, as he told Mr. Terpstra at the last

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meeting, he is not in favor of the *“squeezing down to get one extra lot.”* He stated the people that live in Claremont Ridge were at the original public hearing when this was brought up and they were told at that time that the houses that would be built behind them would line up with their property lines. Mr. Forbes stated he is not interested in shrinking these lots down just so one extra lot could be added.

Mr. Forbes stated Mr. Terpstra’s reasoning is not valid for any kind of consideration. He stated Mr. Terpstra purchased this property knowing the costs and knowing his responsibilities and this is what the package came with.

Mr. Forbes stated he is not at all interested in adding the extra lot. Mr. Terpstra stated he understood what Mr. Forbes was saying, but from the other standpoint, back then when they started Renaissance from 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, they were putting in 50 lot phases every year. Mr. Terpstra stated when this parcel was started they had sold off the last phase in a couple of hours.

Mr. Terpstra stated that six months later, this parcel was approved, platted and recorded and six lots were sold all to the same builder. He stated of the six lots only three were built on. Mr. Terpstra stated from 2007 until 2012, there were eleven homes in the subdivision.

Mr. Terpstra stated these are the struggles that he went through. He stated he was sure the Board could understand the type of money that was invested into this project and then have it sit there. Mr. Terpstra stated there were issues with the banks, appraisals, coming up with capital again and again to make this project work.

Mr. Terpstra stated they were talking about a subdivision that was put in in approximately mid-1980s. He stated if there was an argument, it would be the values of their homes based on how the lots matched up. Mr. Terpstra stated if he had to venture a guess the homes in this location, on the high end, would be \$200,000; he stated every house going in this development now will be \$400,000 plus. He stated every time a home goes in now the Claremont Ridge home values go up. Mr. Terpstra stated only four lots will really be affected by the addition of the lot on his side.

Mr. Forbes stated that he understands the economics of how the building industry was hit in 2008. He stated that Mr. Terpstra was not the only builder that was affected by the economic down turn. Mr. Forbes stated that there has not been another builder who came before the Plan Commission with an alteration to

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a plan saying they needed more lots because the recession cost them money. Mr. Forbes stated this does not justify Mr. Terpstra's request.

Mr. Terpsta asked if there was any chance of this proposal going through. Mr. Forbes responded, "*Not from me.*" Mr. Forbes stated he was fine with the original plan that was approved. Mr. Terpstra stated he would like to hear from the neighbors to see if this is going to be a problem. Mr. Terpstra stated if they come in and have a legitimate argument he's willing to hear it, but the argument in his mind, could only be the values.

Mr. Forbes stated it would be Mr. Terpstra's responsibility to notify the homeowners. He stated the homeowners will be at the meeting. Mr. Forbes asked the Board members if they had any further questions. There were no further questions.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Forbes stated even though this is a study session, there is a large crowd this evening. Mr. Forbes opened the floor for public comment. He asked for public comment.

Joe Hero, 11723 South Oak Ridge Drive

Mr. Hero asked if the Town keeps adding all of the subdivisions, who is doing the traffic studies to see what the impact is on the rest of the arteries in the Town. He asked who was doing a traffic study to see what the impact is on the fire and ambulance service. He asked who is certifying that the Town is not creating a big, congestive situation that endangers the residents of the Town as far as fire and police service. He asked if these questions had been addressed. He asked if it was included in the Town's Master Plan.

Mr. Forbes explained that First Group Engineering is addressing the traffic concerns and are reviewing the Town's Thoroughfare Master Plan. He stated that the Council is in constant conversation with the Fire Chief and Police Chief as to the needs of the community based on growth. Mr. Forbes stated the aforementioned entities are reviewing the issues addressed by Mr. Hero and the findings will be included in the Comprehensive Master Plan and the Thoroughfare Master Plan.

Mr. Hero asked when the studies would be done so the citizens could look at the traffic situation and make educated comments to the Plan Commission. Mr. Forbes stated the studies would be done shortly. Mr. Kil stated his guess would be approximately a month to a month and a half.

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Mr. Forbes stated when the information is complete, it would be made available at the Clerk Treasurer's office and the Town website.

Robert Birlson, Joliet Street:

Mr. Birlson stated he was at the last Plan Commission meeting when, to his surprise, he discovered that the proposed new town center is to be located on Joliet Street from Route 41 east to the railroad tracks and from Joliet north to 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. He stated he was appalled at what was going to happen to his residential area. Mr. Birlson stated that there are residents present tonight that feel the same way.

Mr. Birlson stated that Mr. Kil sent an e-mail to Mrs. Thiel saying that no home would be taken for the new town center on Joliet Street except Rod's. He stated if you look at the plan, that there are homes that are being taken. Mr. Birlson stated the residents don't like it. They don't like the roundabout or the new road going into Boyer Development. He stated they don't like any of this idea of the new town center in this area.

Mr. Birlson stated he understands there are problems on Joliet Street and Route 41 with left turn out and left turn in. He stated if this is a problem, change it right now by eliminating the left turns out on to Route 41 and left turns in. He stated this would eliminate traffic accidents. He stated he would be for this change and all of his neighbors are too.

Mr. Birlson stated to have a town center in the historic area is absurd. He stated the homes have been in there a long time. He stated his home is the oldest house in St. John standing. He stated his home is 175 years old this year. He stated his wife is the fifth generation in this house.

Mr. Birlson stated this is not a blighted area; everyone takes care of their homes. He stated the residents don't want to be attacked by commercial buildings. He stated the prices will drop through the roof. He stated the new revised plan reflects business in his back yard. Mr. Birlson stated none of this is acceptable.

Mr. Forbes stated, based on the letter, the Town is not taking anybody's home other than the Parada property.

(General discussion ensued.)

Mr. Birlson stated a suggestion the Industrial Drive and cul de sac from Joliet and go south, that would be better option because it ties perfectly into the road by Strack & Van Til and there is a traffic light there. He stated a traffic light would not be needed at 96<sup>th</sup> Avenue if this plan was followed.

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Mr. Birlson stated people want to move on Route 41; they don't want to have to keep stopping. He stated the Town should extend the cul de sac over the tracks to Strack and Van Til. He stated if they have to make a trade, maybe eliminate the crossing at Thielen and put the crossing down by the cul de sac.

Mr. Birlson stated he understands the difficulty of getting access over railroad tracks but maybe one crossing could be traded for another crossing. He stated then the traffic could be put through to Strack & Van Til Road and have a parallel road on Route 41 to go up to Boyer. He stated this would make the traffic moves.

Mr. Birlson stated having a roundabout right by a set of tracks sounds dangerous. Mr. Birlson opined that it's dangerous.

Mr. Birlson stated the residents are not stopping until this plan is removed off of the web site and it is changed.

Jerry Swetz, 9490 Joliet Street:

Mr. Swetz stated he was at a meeting and he heard one of the candidates talking about transparency of business and how the Town is run. He stated he also heard a candidate claim last night that there weren't any more homes that were going to be destroyed on Joliet other than just the one for the roundabout.

Mr. Swetz stated his question is where and when was this decision ever made? Where was the authorization from the Town Manager to buy the property? Where was the decision changed that the St. John plans would be modified, that changes would be made to Joliet Street?

Mr. Swetz asked where is the transparency? Where did this meeting actually take place?

Mr. Forbes stated that there has been a lot of discussion on this and the Town is still working on details of the agreement with the developer. Mr. Forbes stated Mr. Parada and Mr. Thiel have been contacted because their property is involved in the roundabout.

Mr. Kil put the drawing on the media screen.

Mr. Forbes stated that the Boyer development was separate from the concept plan of the town center. Mr. Swetz asked if the town center is not going to be taking up houses on Joliet Street where is it going to be moved to? He asked if it would be put where the train station is going to be or is still going to go Joliet and Thielen?

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Mr. Forbes stated it is just a discussion point. He stated that the Town is not planning on building it. He stated it is putting the idea out there. He stated it is a concept. He stated a good example is the train station, he stated that the train station has been in the Comprehensive Master Plan for five years. He stated a train station has yet to be built.

Mr. Forbes explained that the Comprehensive Master Plan is an overall concept plan, although the Boyer plans were included in it. He stated he believes this is where the confusion comes in. Mr. Forbes stated that there is real development in the Comprehensive Master Plan.

Mr. Swetz asked other than the roundabout on Joliet, the Town has no plans to do anything on Joliet or the other homes there? Mr. Forbes responded, "No." Mr. Forbes stated part of the proposed Boyer Development includes the roundabout on Joliet Street and the change to Route 41 and not allowing left-in/left-out.

Mr. Swetz stated the concept of a roundabout is a poor concept and he doesn't think it is necessary here. He stated, in looking on the Federal Highway Administration website, building a roundabout by a set of railroad tracks is a very poor idea. He stated it would require quite a bit of research; and he doesn't think any research has been done.

Mr. Swetz stated to have a roundabout right next to the railroad tracks where school buses go up and down the street every morning and every afternoon....there will be a roundabout right by the railroad tracks. He stated he has to make sure he leaves his house at the right time in the morning so he doesn't get stopped by school buses. He stated this is the kind of traffic that will be backed up on the roundabout. Mr. Swetz stated this is not a wise move at all.

Mr. Swetz stated that one reason for the roundabout is to handle traffic flow. He stated quite a bit of the traffic flow on Joliet Street comes from the east from the Gates of St. John headed towards Route 41. He stated that this traffic wants to make left turns. Mr. Swetz stated that this traffic should be diverted and not kept on Joliet Street; he stated this traffic should all be diverted over to 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue where there is a traffic light.

Mr. Swetz asked if you're going to have this roundabout at the railroad tracks why wouldn't you have a road that goes from out of the Boyer subdivision right next to the railroad tracks? He asked why does it have to come through?

Mr. Kil stated the whole idea is to eliminate all of the traffic flow on Joliet Street from the roundabout to US Route 41. He stated once the traffic is diverted, it will go to

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96<sup>th</sup> Avenue at Route 41. He stated this is what is supposed to happen. Mr. Kil stated if left turns are eliminated on Joliet Street, the traffic by all of the residents' home will be reduced by at least 90 percent. He stated the traffic with the roundabout keeps flowing and that was the whole idea of the roundabout. He stated that traffic engineers involved in the concept felt it was far more dangerous to have a four way stop that would back up traffic over the railroad tracks. He stated that is the only reason that the roundabout is being discussed.

Mr. Kil stated the size of the roundabout is extremely important. He stated the roundabout by the Catholic church was used as a template, a very nice roundabout with a clock tower in the middle of it. He stated that the roundabout would eliminate traffic from their homes by pushing it down to 96<sup>th</sup> Avenue and through the commercial development where it should be.

Mr. Forbes stated instead of shifting all of the traffic off of 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, it is essentially shifting it down to 96<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the traffic light.

(General discussion ensued.)

Mr. Swetz opined the concept is poor and he doesn't know that the traffic study has been adequate. He stated that all of the traffic that's coming out of the shopping center area is going to be dumped into a residential area. Mr. Swetz stated that it looks that the plan was designed with the developer in mind and not the Town residents in mind. He stated that the road would be running along closer to the tracks rather than come through someone's cabinet shop or some of the other areas.

Mr. Kil stated that he talked to Mr. Thiel, who represents his family, and Mr. Thiel stated they have no problem selling the vacant piece of property and not the cabinet shop. Mr. Kil stated he would hope Mr. Thiel would call him if he changed his mind.

(General discussion ensued.)

(Mr. Forbes pounded the gavel for order)

Mr. Forbes called for additional public comment.

Tom Parada, 9535 Joliet Street:

Mr. Parada stated he has lived at his Joliet Street address for 56 years. He stated he has a number of questions and a number of comments.

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Mr. Parada stated on September 6 of this year, he was contacted by Mr. Kil. He stated Mr. Kil told him that the Town was going to appropriate his property and they would use whatever means necessary to get his property.

Mr. Parada states he understands this and will *“take one for the Town if that’s what it takes.”* He stated he does not want to leave Town and plans on living his life in St. John until the day he dies. Mr. Parada stated he has started repairing his house. He stated he is being hit with all kinds of threats of having to make repairs. Mr. Parada asked which is it, does he repair it and live in it or does he does nothing and sell it to the Town for the \$31,000 they offered him.

Mr. Parada stated he would like to talk about the techniques that were used. He stated Mr. Kil called him and confused his kindness and respect for ignorance and stupidity. Mr. Parada stated he is not in the best health, maybe a little older and tired, but he is neither stupid nor ignorant. Mr. Parada acknowledged that his house has deteriorated. He stated he took care of his father from the age 95 through 98 years for 24 hours a day, which explains the condition of his home.

Mr. Parada stated that (pointing) *“That man has lied to me every step of the way.”*

Mr. Parada stated that he informed Mr. Kil that he doesn’t want to sell his property. He stated he has started working on the house. He stated he has hopes to turn the home into a nice, handicapped-accessible home with a goldsmithing shop.

Mr. Parada stated that Mr. Kil told him not to do anything to the house. He stated he was told the home was going to be torn down. He stated one later he received a call from Tom Bochnowski, appraiser, informing him they were coming to his home the next day. Mr. Parada stated that the appraiser was an *“Assassin sent out to assassinate the value of his property.”*

Mr. Kil commented that he is listening to Mr. Parada stand up and lie. Mr. Parada stated he is going to keep talking and he isn’t even started yet. Mr. Forbes requested that Mr. Parada wrap up his comments. Mr. Parada stated had every intention to keep talking and he was not ready to stop talking.

Mr. Forbes stated he controlled the floor. Mr. Parada stated, *“This is called civil disobedience and it’s allowed and it’s why we’re a country. I’ve been a gentleman to everyone here and now I expect the same treatment.”*

(The audience applauded.)

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Mr. Parada state he doesn't take calling a man a liar lightly. He stated he is a Christian and he doesn't lie. He stated Mr. Kil called him after the appraisers came out. He stated he called Mr. Kil on the 10<sup>th</sup> to ask what the appraisers came up with. He stated Mr. Kil told him that it doesn't work that way. Mr. Kil stated that it would take longer.

Mr. Parada stated that his house was sold at a tax sale. He stated Mr. Kil offered to buy the house back for him. Mr. Parada stated that Mr. Kil told him that the Town would rather buy the house back from him than the person who bought it at the tax sale. Mr. Parada stated he talked to Mr. Kil on another occasion and asked him if he was certain that the Town was committed to buying his property back for me. He stated he was told not to worry about it because it was a done deal.

Mr. Parada all of this happened on July 10. He stated five weeks went by and there was no word from Mr. Kil. He stated at this point, he believed he was being duped and he bought his property back on his own with a little bit of stock he had inherited from his mother and with some help from some very kind people of the Town of St. John.

Mr. Parada stated that after seven and a half weeks he was contacted and told to come in and sign some papers to sell his property. He stated Mr. Kil had not kept him informed in any way shape or form. Mr. Forbes stated Mr. Parada was told that the Town was waiting for the reply from the appraisers. Mr. Parada stated, according to his lawyer, the appraiser's report was done in two and a half weeks.

Mr. Parada stated that the document for him to sign was giving him \$31,000. He stated he had already bought the property back so he was not interested in an offer of \$31,000.

Mr. Parada stated when the appraiser came out ---

Mr. Forbes requested that Mr. Parada wrap things up.

Mr. Parada stated he has something to say. He stated this is civil disobedience and it is allowed. He stated he is not through making his point yet. He state *"You guys are trying to string me up and I've done nothing to you, nothing to you whatsoever. Folks, do you mind if I talk?"*

(Audience applauds.)

Mr. Parada stated he told Mr. Kil at the Comprehensive Plan meeting that he would take the \$31,000 offer if Mr. Kil would find him another place in St. John with the

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same amount of property, same amount of outbuilding space, same amount of living space. He said he received no reply.

Mr. Parada stated that they were trying to shut him down because he does not have a functioning bathroom. He stated he was going to put new tile in the bathroom and utility room and a new curbless shower. Mr. Parada was told not to do anything to the house.

Mr. Forbes stated that this meeting was a St. John Plan Commission study session. Mr. Forbes stated he opened the floor as a courtesy. Mr. Parada stated he has been a gentleman. He stated this is called civil disobedience. Mr. Forbes stated this is a professional meeting and he controls the floor. He asked if anyone else had a public comment. He called again for public comment. There was no additional public comment.

(Mr. Parada was commenting in the background.)

(Mr. Forbes pounds gavel.)

Mr. Forbes called for a motion to adjourn. The motion died for lack for action.

Mr. Swetz addressed the Board saying he hoped they understood how serious the residents take this matter. He stated he understands the Board is tasked with a responsibility to advance and grow the Town. Mr. Swetz stated he appreciates the work that the Council has done. He stated it is appreciated how much time and energy the council members put into the job.

Mr. Swetz reiterated that the Joliet Street residents don't want their houses ruined. He stated he and his wife have put a lot of time, energy and effort into their home to make it beautiful. He stated they want to make St. John a beautiful community.

Mr. Forbes stated he understands the residents' concerns. He to the group, *"If that were to be removed, would that not validate the concerns of the residents in that area, saying, look, they were going to take our homes, but now they're not."* Mr. Forbes asked if removing the plan would honestly settle the matter. He stated that just because the picture is not in the Comprehensive Master Plan, will that actually settle the residents' fears.

Mr. Forbes stated there is so much fear-mongering going on from candidates that are running for election this year. Mr. Forbes apologized for bringing up politics. He stated that there are several candidates out there that are preying on the residents'

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concerns. Mr. Forbes reiterated that he understands the residents' concerns. He stated that the concerns have been built and grown into fears that are unsubstantiated.

Mr. Forbes stated the public hearing is to get public input into the plans. Mr. Forbes stated that there is another public hearing on the Comprehensive Master Plan. He told the residents that they would have another opportunity to discuss this.

Mr. Forbes reiterated he understands the residents' fears and concerns. He stated he is not dismissing any of the comments that are coming from the residents that live in this area. Mr. Forbes stated at the end of the day, if the concerns could just be addressed and let the fear go everyone could move forward. Mr. Forbes reiterated he is not interested in taking any house on Joliet Street or Thielen, or in the entire area.

Mr. Forbes stated this is a drawing. Mr. Forbes repeated there will be another public hearing and it will be a more appropriate time for the residents to comment because their comments can be made a part of the official record of the public hearing. He stated that the next public hearing is on November 4, 2015.

Mr. Forbes stated he fully expects the residents to turn out on November 4, 2015, and he looks forward to their comments. Mr. Forbes asked that this matter be addressed professionally. Mr. Forbes stated bantering back and forth will do no good. He requested that people used the podium, state their name and address and then speak.

Mr. Swetz stated that if the Council would take this plan off the board, it would ease a lot of apprehension. He stated because of some of the discussion, rumors, whatever make the validity or the reliability of the Town's word (unintelligible). Mr. Swetz stated this is unfortunate but that's the situation and he just wanted to be honest about it. Mr. Swetz stated "*We question whether you're actually working in our best interests or if you're working in the interests of business.*"

Mr. Forbes repeated he understands the residents' concerns and it is unfortunate that the rumors have more validity than the facts. Mr. Swetz stated that the residents have not had a lot of a facts. He stated when the meetings were cancelled a couple of weeks ago it just adds to the concerns of '*okay, what's going on.*' Mr. Swetz explained this is what the perception seems to be and how the homeowners have taken things. Mr. Swetz stated may be the residents are wrong and he hopes they are wrong, but he just wanted to make the Board aware of their situation.

Mr. Forbes stated it was extremely unfortunate that the meeting was cancelled because two members had family matters to take care of. He stated that there were not

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enough members to reach a quorum. Mr. Forbes stated he waited in the lobby for people to show up. He apologized for this unfortunate meeting cancellation.

Kathleen Fox 10753 Thielen Street:

Ms. Fox stated this is just a proposed plan, and obviously a number of residents on Joliet and Thielen Street are seriously concerned about their houses coming down. She stated if the Board is willing to say, hey, let's change that plan, the residents would be happy with that.

Ms. Fox stated that the roundabout is a problem. She stated as soon as the roundabout goes in the traffic goes in, property values drop even if the residents still own their homes. She asked what the houses will appraise at when people decide to sell if a roundabout goes in. Ms. Fox stated she received no notice when Public Works went in across the street; she stated four homes got leveled then. She stated she has Public Works in front of her house, an industrial park behind her house and if any of the other things go through, what is her house going to be worth. She asked if they would offer \$80,000 for her house?

Ms. Fox asked if this happened in the Board's neighborhoods around their homes what would they be thinking?

(Audience applause.)

Mr. Fox stated she is on the first street ever platted in Town. She asked how many houses will be left on the street when the Town gets done with it? Ms. Fox asked the Board to give the residents a break as they are trying to hold on to the Town and the Board is fighting them every step of the way. She asked, can you work with us?

Mr. Forbes stated he doesn't see it as fighting. Ms. Fox stated if the Board is willing to make sure that the homes are not torn down on Joliet and the end of Thielen Street, she begged the Board to get rid of the roundabout also. She stated the Board could put the roundabout down by the industrial park or by Three Springs.

(Audience applause.)

Scott Richardson, 9445 Joliet Street:

Mr. Richardson stated that nobody moved to St. John or decided to stay in St. John for the proposed development that they are trying to put into the Town. He stated residents wanted to live in a sleepy community without all of the traffic, without all of the development, without all of the commercialism.

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Mr. Richardson stated all of the people from Illinois that keep moving to St. John are trying to get out of that situation in Illinois and move to a quiet community and St. John is trying to appease builders. He asked what benefit there is to the homeowners of St. John for all of the development in St. John.

Mr. Richardson pointed out US 41 is still the same as it was 50 years ago, 93<sup>rd</sup> is still the same road it was 50 years ago as is Joliet Street. He stated the Board is trying to squeeze all of the additional development in Town with no improvement to the infrastructure.

(Audience applause.)

Mr. Richardson asked what is being gained by the residents of St. John, especially the long-term residents of St. John? He asked what the residents will gain by the development. He stated St. John is being turned into Main Street in Highland which is an absolute nightmare to travel.

Mr. Richardson stated he does not understand why he was not notified about the meeting at Lake Central a few months ago. He stated he heard about it from his neighbor. Mr. Forbes stated there was information about the meeting on the Town's web site.

(General discussion ensued.)

Mr. Richardson stated the big question is why is commercialism being developed in this Town. He stated the Town is not set up for commercialism and cannot handle it. He stated pushing development on to the side streets of St. John is not the answer.

Mr. Forbes called for anyone who had not spoken who wished to make public comment.

Unidentified:

He stated he didn't mean to be disrespectful but he had to leave to tend to his wife.

Mr. Forbes called for additional public comment.

Joe Gerlach, 1946 Thielen Street:

Mr. Gerlach stated that he suddenly found out that his house would be taken away, a road coming through from Civic Drive. Mr. Gerlach stated he wanted to introduce himself to the Board.

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Mr. Gerlach stated that he feels it has been neglect on his part to not have attended the Town meetings. He stated he came to St. John in 1955. He stated he was very active in the community, started a Little League, CYO basketball and senior gathering. Mr. Gerlach stated he just wanted the Board to know him. He stated he is a Christian man.

Mr. Gerlach stated he and his wife have both been active with youth groups. He stated back in the 1960s after he was married he felt the home he moved to in St. John was made available to him to raise his family.

Mr. Forbes told Mr. Gerlach that the Town is not taking his house, and have no intention of taking his house. Mr. Gerlach stated he wanted to be at the meeting to back up his neighbors.

(Audience applause.)

Mr. Parada thanked the Board for listening to him. Mr. Forbes apologized for his earlier frustration. Mr. Parada acknowledged the apology.

Mr. Parada asked what the problem with the roundabout was. He stated the roundabout drawing was the stupidest piece of engineering he had ever seen. Mr. Parada asked for the Board's indulgence.

(General discussion ensued.)

Mr. Parada pointed to the drawing, reiterating he is not an engineer, he stated the roundabout would come through his front bedroom and part of his living room. He stated that the Town has to have a roundabout there is a better way to do it.

Mr. Parada explained and pointed out on the drawing how the roundabout could be redrawn to better serve the Town. He stated this is just one take on the roundabout.

Mr. Prada stated it is obvious, if it were up to the residents present tonight, the roundabout would not happen at all. He cited eminent domain law. He stated all of his land is not needed to put in a roundabout.

Mr. Parada opined that the only reason St. John is getting a roundabout is because Schererville has one, *"keeping up with the Joneses"* He stated there is a better solution.

Mr. Parada stated a lot of people absolutely hate roundabouts. He stated they are very efficient, but not when they're 200 feet away from a railroad track.

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Joe Hero, 11723 South Oak Ridge Drive

Mr. Hero stated there is enough controversy here, from what was heard, that the Board should scheduling November 4, 2015, as the day after the elections to do this, is too soon. He stated there is too much confusion. He stated that there are alternate ways to solve the problem.

Mr. Hero stated that the Board should postpone the November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015, meeting for a couple of weeks and do some more studying on what needs to be done here. He stated it is obvious listening to everyone's comments, there are other, better proposal made, like using 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He stated the issue has been raised whether this is taking care of a developer or what

Mr. Hero stated using 97<sup>th</sup> down by Strack & Van Til, that would solve a lot of problems and it wouldn't even have to hit Joliet Street. Mr. Hero reiterated his request to cancel the November 4, 2015, meeting and study this matter and take the comments of the residents and come up with a rational better alternative solution so that this problem disappears and the residents aren't concerned.

Mr. Hero stated the Board should look at access along the tracks. He stated all of the things that were brought up by Mr. Swetz might be a better solution. He stated in order to do this, the Town cannot have clandestine meetings with the developer and spin it out to the people.

Mr. Forbes stated the purpose of the November 4, 2015, meeting is to collect data from the residents and effectively make any changes that need to be made to the Comprehensive Master Plan. He stated if a public meeting is not held, they cannot get a collect information and get a complete record. Mr. Forbes acknowledged he received a lot of information from the residents' tonight, but more will be collected.

Mr. Forbes reiterated the purpose of the public hearing is to collect the input from the residents, and that is the reason that the public hearing will be held.

Mr. Hero stated the residents gave the Board an advantage by speaking tonight, and the Board should take advantage of it.

Mr. Forbes stated he would see everyone at the public hearing.

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**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Forbes asked for a motion to adjourn. “*So moved,*” by Mr. Redar. Mr. Kozel seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously carried by voice vote (5/0).

Ayes --- all. Nays --- none.

(The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.)

**A TRUE COPY**

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Susan E. Wright, Recording Secretary  
St. John Plan Commission