

Dear Neighbors,

November 28, 2016

In the last 20+ years there have been numerous inquiries to the Village of Elm Grove about the possibility of redevelopment on the "Reinders Property" north of Watertown Plank Road and east of Elm Grove Road. The multiple land parcels include both undeveloped commercial/industrial property and existing buildings. The area has also been the source of numerous complaints generally regarding housekeeping issues.

In early 2016 Wangard Partners and the owners of Reinders properties approached the Village to discuss what Village regulations would govern any redevelopment proposal and what process the applicants to redevelop the site would need to follow. One of the important aspects of the Elm Grove regulations for commercial type development is the requirement for presentation of a conceptual proposal to the Plan Commission and the public. The purpose of this requirement is to better inform residents of potential projects and encourage public involvement.

On March 7, 2016, the Wangard Partners team presented a conceptual project proposal for a multifamily development to the Elm Grove Planning Commission. The meeting was very well attended by Village residents and numerous comments responding to the conceptual proposal were presented. While there were many specific questions and issues raised, most generally fell under the following broad categories:

- Height of proposed buildings and density: number of residential units per acre
- Traffic impacts on Watertown Plank Road and Elm Grove Road
- Site environmental remediation and water table concerns
- Site parking and green space plans
- Public safety and school impacts
- Financial impacts and benefits for the Village
- Building design and quality
- Impact on character of Elm Grove

The Plan Commission suggested that the developer continue to solicit community input prior to submitting any application. After the Plan Commission presentation, the Wangard team met individually with interested site area neighbors and held open house sessions to receive comments regarding the conceptual plan and present proposed modifications. In addition, responding to suggestion of residents, the Village Board appointed an Ad hoc citizen committee to identify and evaluate issues regarding the conceptual proposals and advise the developer on community interests. The Ad hoc committee members were all selected because of their professional expertise and their community involvement. The Village Board will utilize the conclusions of the Ad hoc committee deliberations.

Since the March 7th conceptual presentation, the Wangard team has presented modified development proposals to the Ad hoc committee and at public open house meetings. To facilitate public review and support the Ad hoc committee effort the Village has created a unique website location where relevant documents and correspondence are available for review.

No application to do anything on the property has been submitted to the Village. No Village committee, board or commission has considered or taken any action having anything to do with a possible project on the Reinders property.

As Village President I have encouraged the Wangard team to solicit public input and reflect the input in any future development application they might submit. Personally, I have avoided participation in Ad hoc committee meetings to avoid even the appearance of an effort to influence whatever recommendations they may make to the developer or to the Village Board. The committee has been provided a “suggested topics” list simply as a guide to the types of issues which are likely to be raised by an application and where the committee input will be helpful.

If an application to develop the Reinders’ properties is filed it will be treated just like every application for any kind of permit or approval. There will be multiple opportunities for public testimony, we will make all materials possible available for public review and the staff and the Board will treat everyone with respect. The process will be deliberate and open as it always has been. The Village Board will weigh a proposal to determine what is the best outcome for the entire Village.

I ask that anyone who participates in the process to review a possible development plan to be courteous and respectful of others. Elm Grove residents and business owners have strong opinions about what makes Elm Grove special. We may disagree on various issues but we agree we want to keep Elm Grove special.

Neil Palmer
Village President