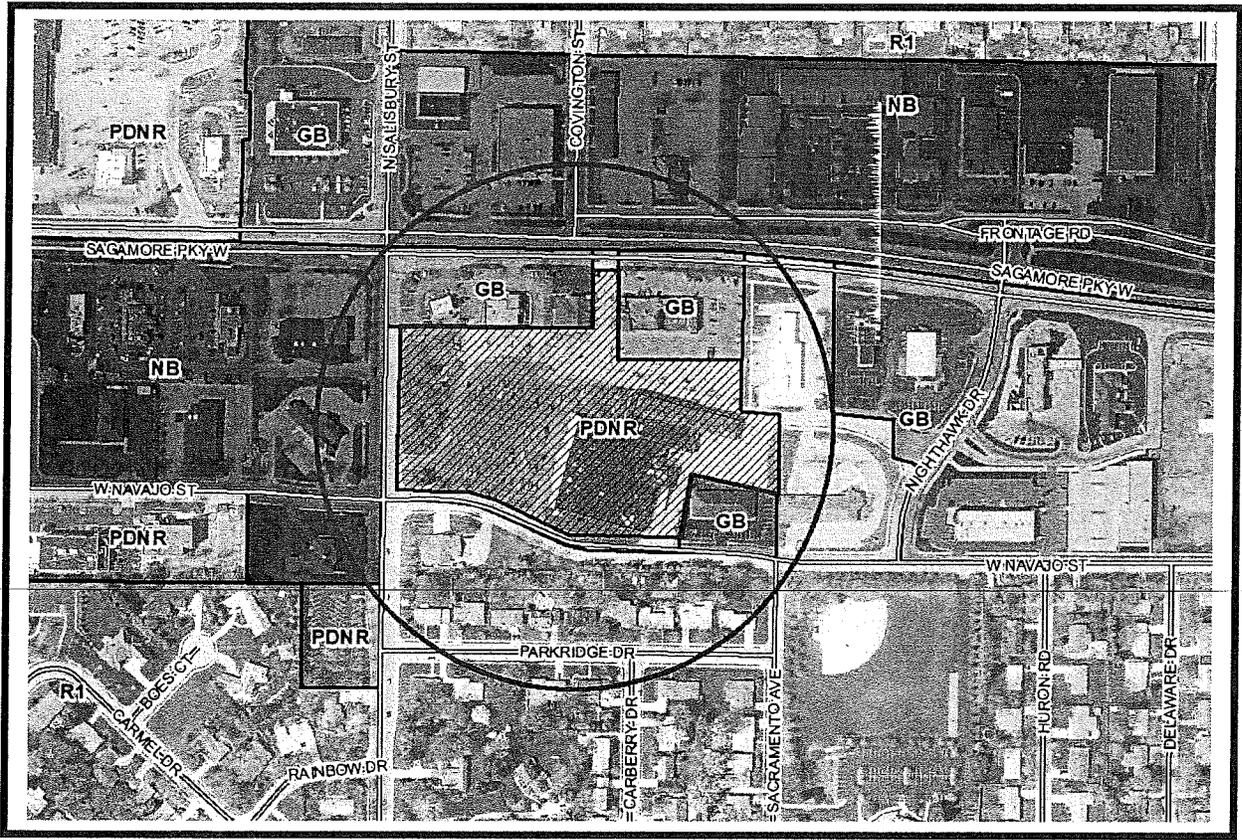

Z-2599
WABASH VILLAGE, INC
(PDNR to GB)

STAFF REPORT
June 11, 2015



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REQUEST MADE, PROPOSED USE, LOCATION:

Petitioner/Owner, represented by attorney Joseph Bumbleburg, is requesting rezoning of an abandoned phase (7.557 acres) of the Wabash Village Planned Development from PDNR to GB. The property is located east of Salisbury, south of Sagamore Parkway West, and north of Navajo Street, more specifically 2410 N. Salisbury Street, West Lafayette, Wabash 7 (SE) 23-4.

ZONING HISTORY AND AREA ZONING PATTERNS:

Originally zoned and developed under GB standards, the site was rezoned to PDNR for the Wabash Village Planned Development (Z-2176) in August of 2004. This ambitious project sought to create three phases, each with its own lot, to allow for additional commercial development and the redevelopment of the existing Marsh site. Two of the phases, Lot 2 (Dog & Suds) and Lot 3 (the small commercial building on the corner of Nighthawk & Navajo), received Final Detailed Plan approval and were final platted in 2005. The property owner never submitted Final Detailed Plans for Phase 1, the Marsh site, and in August of 2014 this final phase of the planned development fell into abandonment. Apart from the PDNR zoning for the Wabash Village and other commercial planned developments in the vicinity, GB and NB zoning dominate the Sagamore Parkway corridor through West Lafayette. R1 zoning is found to the south, across Navajo Street.

AREA LAND USE PATTERNS:

Petitioner's site is currently a fully developed shopping center and all adjacent properties have developed commercially. West Lafayette Fire Station #2 is located across Navajo to the south along with extensive single-family residential development.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION:

Wabash Village Shopping Center is bound by Sagamore Parkway, a divided primary arterial, to the north; Navajo, an urban local, on the south; Salisbury, a secondary arterial, on the west; and Nighthawk Drive, an urban local, to the east. The shopping center used to derive access from all four streets until the city's work on Salisbury closed that entrance. Due to phase 1 of the original planned development being abandoned, none of the promised internal traffic circulation improvements and landscape islands was ever installed and the site largely remains as it was when it was first constructed in 1959: A large, paved-over commercial site with 245 parking spaces and no safe and logical traffic circulation plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

Public utilities serve the site.

STAFF COMMENTS:

By ordinance, abandoned phases of planned developments cannot be redeveloped. In this case, the existing Marsh and other commercial uses present are essentially grandfathered and the only remedy to allow this property to redevelop in the future is to rezone. This petition seeks to return this largest phase of the Wabash Village Planned Development to the same commercial zoning district it held (GB) prior to the planned development rezone in 2004. Due to the abandonment of this phase and the failure of the developer to implement the original planned development's vision, returning this property to its former GB zone would seem to make sense for the sake of future redevelopment efforts. However, while staff does not disagree with the requested zone being reinstated on this site, staff does disagree with the timing of when it should occur.

In its support for the original planned development rezone (Z-2176), staff cited two primary reasons for its recommendation of approval. First, the project's commercial expansion proposal was a sign of "...a healthy economy in our local community..." and second, the project would provide: "...an opportunity to bring almost 12 acres of commercial property closer to current development standards." It is this second reason that prevents staff from supporting this rezone at this time. Since its original development in 1959 and renovation in the 1980's, little has been done to improve the safety of traffic circulation on the site. The original planned development called for the driveway entrance onto Salisbury to be closed and relocated to a mid-block point to the north. While the city's street work on Salisbury closed that entrance, the promised new mid-block connection never materialized, except for an apron recently installed by the city. It is time for Wabash Village to connect to that apron and begin the process of bringing this property "closer to current development standards".

While the existing abandonment situation has grandfathered all uses and prevents redevelopment of the property the city could approve and the owner build a driveway connection to the installed apron on Salisbury. Though a building permit was issued in April of 2015 to begin this work, staff has observed no progress on the site and the expiration date of this permit is looming. According to section 6-2-4-a of the UZO a building permit expires when:

"...the work authorized by the permit is not begun within 120 days of issuance."

Once this modicum of allowable improvement is done to the property, staff can affirm to the city council that the first steps to improve the traffic circulation issues at Wabash Village have been taken and that we're ready to recommend approval of the GB rezone request.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Denial