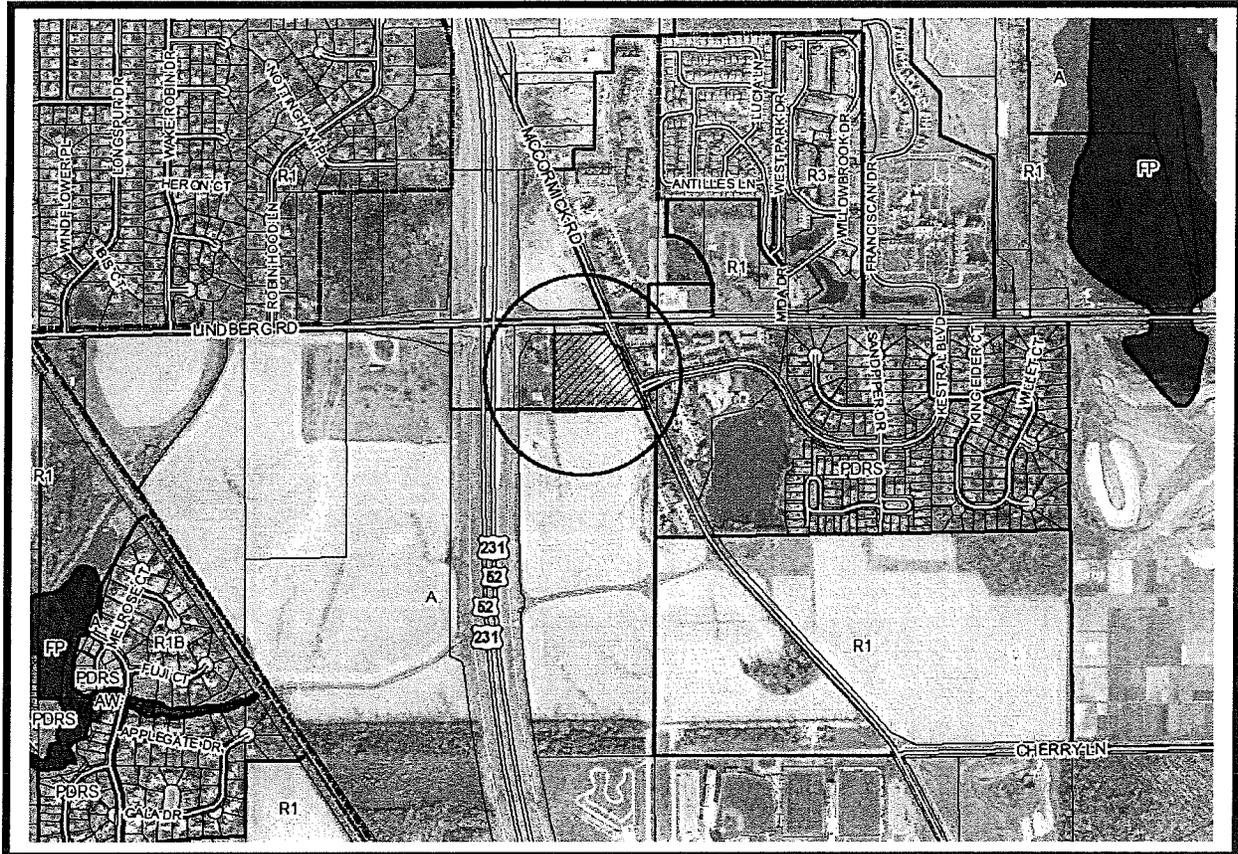

Z-2634
BLACKBIRD FARMS APARTMENTS PH. II, LLC
(R1 to R3W)

STAFF REPORT
November 12, 2015



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R1 TO R3W**

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REQUEST MADE, PROPOSED USE, LOCATION:

Petitioner, represented by attorney Marianne Mitten Owen, is requesting rezoning of 5.3 acres from R1 to R3W to allow an expansion of Blackbird Farms with the construction of six new apartment buildings with a total of 75 units on property located at the southwest corner of Lindberg and McCormick Roads, West Lafayette, Wabash 14 (NE) 23-5.

ZONING HISTORY AND AREA ZONING PATTERNS:

The property has been zoned R1 for many years and zoning in the vicinity has changed very little over time. R1 zoning is found to the west of the subject property while Agricultural zoning lies to the south. R1 and PDRS zoning is found to the north and PDRS zoning is also found to the east (for Blackbird Farms PD). Rezoning petitions in the vicinity have been few over the years. The last petition in the vicinity (Z-2536, R1 to GB, located north of the subject property on McCormick Road) was withdrawn before it ever reached a hearing.

AREA LAND USE PATTERNS:

The property is currently undeveloped as is land to the west and south. Blackbird Farms PD (the multi-family apartment portion) is found across McCormick Road to the east. McCormick Place Apartments is north of the site across Lindberg Road. The developed areas around the subject property are exclusively residential in character with mixes of densities and a variety of residential unit types.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION:

Lindberg and McCormick Roads are classified as secondary arterials according to the *Thoroughfare Plan*. Access to the property would be off of McCormick Road. Commercial driveway entrance permits into the site are granted by the City of West Lafayette Engineering Department.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

Public utilities are available to serve the site.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Similar to our opinion of last month's rezone petition at the corner of State Street and US 231 (Z-2631 R2 to OR), this rezone petition for multi-family residential development generally comports with staff's overall land use plan for the US-231 corridor.

As conceived during many staff discussions leading up to the publication of the US 52 Corridor Study six years ago and supported by numerous rezoning staff report opinions over the years, our land use strategy strives to prevent US 231 from devolving into a commercial strip corridor by holding non-residential uses to three major intersection nodes: State Street, Cumberland Avenue, and Sagamore Parkway and their immediate vicinities. In doing this, the large gap primarily between the Cumberland and State Street intersections remains available to develop residentially, with mixes of residential densities being appropriate at the Lindberg Road intersection and those areas closer to the non-residential nodes. The resulting land use pattern leaves a large section of US 231 in a true parkway state with the trail system, roadside landscaping and preserved natural areas being the primary focus and its accompanying residential development serving as a secondary focus.

This rezoning petition serves this land use strategy by introducing the zoning (and subsequent development) necessary to solidifying this intersection's mixed-density residential future. And relative to the student housing vacancy work staff's been reporting on over the last three years, our findings are clear that higher vacancies are found on the urban fringe in West Lafayette where multi-family units cater almost exclusively to undergraduate students. Blackbird Farms has a demonstrated history of catering to a mix of groups including graduates, singles, couples and family groups.

This relatively modest proposed expansion of a successful, mixed-group, multi-family development meets staff's long-range land use goals for this area and has our support.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval