

Minkler Rd. subdivision OK'd in split ballots

194 acre project gets green light from Oswego Village Board

By John Etheredge

In a series of split ballots this past week, the Oswego Village Board approved the development of a large residential subdivision on the village's south side.

The board's positive votes give Ryland Homes of East Dundee the go-ahead to proceed with the development of the former Keck family farm (also known as the Leigh Farm), a 194.89 acre parcel situated on either side of Minkler Road, approximately one-half mile south of Ill. Route 71.

The property is bordered to the south by the Hunt Club, another large residential development now pending construction.

Ryland's plans for the property call for the construction of 264 single family homes and 163 townhome units on the property.

Individual home lots will range in size from 10,800 square feet to 27,411 square feet. The average lot size in the subdivision will be 13,061 square feet.

As part of the project, Ryland will dedicate property along the east side of Minkler Road to the Oswego School District for the construction of an elementary school.

In addition, Ryland will extend Collins Road west across the northern boundary of the site to Minkler Road. As part of the road extension project, Ryland will contribute 25 percent towards the cost of constructing a bridge on Collins Road spanning Morgan Creek. (Village officials anticipate obtaining additional funds—possibly through a recapture agreement—from the developers of surrounding properties to pay for the bridge's construction.)

The board's votes last week marked the end of several months of reviews and plan changes by the board, village staff and plan commission.

The board, however, was unable to reach a unanimous agreement on the project prior to casting the votes last week.

Casting negative ballots on each of the motions for the project were board members Brian LeClercq and Ron Weilert.

Weilert, prefaced his comments by noting he has known the property owners, Harold and Rebecca Oliver of Yorkville, for a long time and "respects all they do," but said he objects to the density of the project and "putting townhomes up in the middle of cornfields."

Board member Brad Rock, however, took a different view of the project.

Rock noted that the extension of Collins Road by the developers as part of

the project will be a regional improvement that won't cost the village or its taxpayers. The road project will provide a direct connection to Minkler and Orchard roads.

As a resident of a subdivision near the Ryland site, Rock said, "As soon as Collins Road goes through, I'll be on it and it won't cost us a dime."

Concerning the townhomes, Rock said he believes the south side of Collins Road in the development will prove a suitable site for townhomes due to the anticipated high volume of traffic on the road.

Rock said, "I think townhomes will work well there."

Reject developer request to pre-pay water fees

Prior to balloting, the board agreed to a recommendation made by Mark Pries, the village's finance director, to strike a provision contained in the annexation agreement for the property that would have allowed Ryland to pre-pay village water connection and/or water meter fees at current rates after receiving a required 90 day notice of a pending rate increase by the village.

"I highly recommended to the board not to allow a pre-payment," Pries said.

A Ryland official, however, told board members the pre-payment provision would provide the village with money up front that could be invested and earn interest.

But Pries said the village has not offered the pre-payment provision to other developers.

To grant the request for Ryland or another development, Pries said, "could lead to someone not paying their fair of the impact" of their project on the village's water system.

Craig Weber, village president, agreed with Pries, noting the 90 day advance notice of an increase the village must give Ryland is adequate to allow the firm to adjust its prices for home buyers.

During a meeting Aug. 7, the board struck another provision from the agreement that would have capped future increases in village development fees for the subdivision at no more than five percent annually. Currently, the fees the village collects for the school and park districts are scheduled to increase four percent each year.

A Ryland official explained the request would allow them to know "right off the bat" their costs for developing the subdivision.

But board members unanimously agreed they did not want to cap the fees.

"The fees are what they are," board member Charlie Pajor said. "We set them and we increase them in order for them to pay for the projects they are paying for. I can understand you (Ryland officials) want some more surety about what your costs going out will be, but so do we. We can't guarantee our costs are going to be capped at five percent, so I don't see how we can cap yours at five percent."