

Hill Development Countryside

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Traffic study drives off Homart

By STEVE McCRAY

Homart Development Co. officials said last night the company is pulling out of the D. Hill Nursery project.

The decision came after a two-hour meeting with officials from Carpentersville, West Dundee and Sleepy Hollow and apparently hinged on West Dundee's demand that an independent traffic study be conducted for the multi-million dollar project, an object of controversy and intermunicipal debate for more than two years.

Sleepy Hollow and Carpentersville officials, on the other hand, indicated they would forego a full-blown study if it meant Homart would leave, taking its regional shopping center along.

"You leave us no choice," Jack Siegel, Homart attorney, said. "We are withdrawing....Thank you for your time."

Company officials indicated their decision is irrevocable. "We would not

have taken such a clear position if we didn't mean what we said," said one after the meeting in the Carpentersville Village Hall.

Earlier in the meeting Siegel presented revised plans for the 570-acre project at routes 31 and 72. Eliminated were about 300 acres originally planned for residential development, leaving only the shopping center and a 40-acre transitional area for either commercial or residential use. A retention lake would run the length of the project along Route 72, and the D. Hill Bonsai garden would remain.

Siegel said the company had to have a yes-or-no decision before the meeting ended on whether the villages wanted to begin annexation and rezoning hearings on the project. He said the company would not pay for a \$45,000 traffic study on the project which would duplicate the work of Homart consultants, but he said the company would contribute \$4,000 to

\$5,000 for an independent "engineering appraisal" of the company's traffic study data.

After a 20-minute caucus, a poll of Carpentersville trustees showed all favoring beginning annexation and rezoning hearings with Herb Radtke, Ray O'Claire, Jeanne McFadden and Mary Srajer saying traffic matters could be handled during hearings, and Paul Folster and Fritz Heil saying they wanted the study.

Sleepy Hollow Trustee Rob Roberts said his board voted 4-1 to go ahead with the project, hoping the \$5,000 appraisal would do the job. "They gave us a black-or-white choice," he said after the meeting. "We chose white."

West Dundee Village President Ken Aniballi, however, said his board would not back off from its demand for the study, originally agreed to by all three village boards. West Dundee would make its decision on whether to begin an-

nexation and rezoning proceedings after the study was completed, the mayor said.

Siegel said the company would not pay for the \$45,000 traffic study because it would duplicate much of the work of consultants Barton-Aschman and Associates and would involve far more than only the center's impact. He said the villages were demanding a "master traffic plan for the entire region" and "we cannot go along with it." He emphasized

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Our Cover . . .

Staff photographer Mike Chritton went underwater recently to photograph Tina Harrington, 12, who was practicing with the Dundee Township Park District diving team at Thresher Pool in Carpentersville.

Homart pulls out of Hill nursery project

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the Barton-Aschman study focused only on the project's impact, "and we're satisfied with it. In fact, we're betting millions on it."

Michael O'Brien, Homart vice president for real estate, said it was not a matter of money, and he offered to contribute the \$40,000 difference between the \$45,000 study and the company's offer of \$5,000 to construct a bridge across the Fox River, a project estimated at more than \$1 million.

Richard Welcome, project coordinator, added that some persons seemed to demand Homart solve all the township's existing problems, such as traffic congestion, and then solve all future ones.

But Carpentersville Village Engineer Carl Caspers called the full study "very critical." He said the Barton-Aschman study used faulty data, and he emphasized it did not consider what the impact would be on local roads.

"How are you going to get people to the center?" Carpentersville Village

President Glen Gifford asked. "By helicopter?"

Welcome said the company was convinced the more than \$3 million in road improvements recommended in the study would insure a smooth, safe traffic flow to the center.

According to an agreement reached last year, Homart would pre-finance all road improvements and would pay for 50 per cent of them up to \$3 million. The villages would pay the difference from sales tax revenue generated by the shopping center.

Homart officials said last night previous agreements between the company and villages would not be changed by the altered plans. Included would be the road improvement financing, a sales tax sharing among the villages and Homart cooperation with West Dundee businessmen on traffic and parking problems.

The center was not altered substantially by the revised plans, Siegel

said. It still would include between 300,000 and 350,000 square feet of mall space plus four major department stores including Sears and Marshall Field. O'Brien said he could not reveal the names of the other two stores, although Lord & Taylor generally has been acknowledged as one.

Some trustees and members of the audience said the Homart center probably would be the best use of the property, especially considering the land probably will be developed soon by someone and the center would generate needed tax revenue.

Marietta Divan, former Sleepy Hollow trustee, said she initially did not want the center, but now thought it the lesser of two evils in light of the other uses available.

But Tony Arnone, West Dundee, said the center was far out of proportion for the Dundee Township area.

Sleepy Hollow Trustee Celestino Ciuca agreed, saying, "We don't want you."

The residential area dropped in the

revised plans was to have been developed by Urban Investment and Development Co., one of the three initial partners in the project along with Homart and Mafco. O'Brien said Urban had not pulled out of the project and still was giving input. Urban had not, however, signed a contract, he said.

Siegel said the revised plans were necessary because of economics and the "somewhat questionable reception" the residential proposal received from area residents.

Homart officials acknowledged during the village board caucus that they have other area sites in mind for the shopping center project, but they declined to say where. They did say, however, it would be in an area already zoned for the project.

Homart's decision to pull out of the D. Hill project altogether left some trustees stunned, others joyful. Whether the decision will benefit Dundee Township was answered by Mayor Anibaldi: "Only time will tell."

Water meters seen as lesser of two evils