

Carpentersville, later stated that there were discrepancies between the state's

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With all answers

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d 1958 — volume 18, number 45 — Tuesday, Aug. 26, 1975 — published every Tuesday and Thursday — home delivered 60¢/ month





# Homart turns the table

8-26-75

by DONNA JENSEN  
News-Feature Editor

The tables were turned. This time Homart rejected the villages.

Representatives of Carpentersville, West Dundee and Sleepy Hollow met with Homart Development Co. representatives on Wednesday, Aug. 20.

It was almost two years ago that Homart submitted a proposal to these villages to develop (commercially and residentially) over 550 acres of the Hill Nursery and associated property.

After many, many meetings the proposal was still, as Homart attorney Jack Siegel put it, "not consummated."

Siegel also stated at the onset of the meeting that "(Homart's) position couldn't be clearer. We hope to get an

indication this evening that we should proceed. If we learn the communities are not interested, we're going to walk away.

"Do you want us, or don't you? It's that simple."

The main question which the villages were asking Homart at that meeting was whether or not Homart would pay up to \$45,000 for an independent traffic study of the area.

Homart has already had a traffic study done by Barton-Aschmann and Assoc. The villages did not feel this study was adequate.

At the Aug. 20 meeting, Homart informed the villages that they still put their faith behind the Barton-Aschmann study.

"We feel Barton-Aschmann

thoroughly canvassed the traffic situation," said Siegel, "and the reports are absolutely sound as far as our development is concerned."

He added that Homart would contribute up to \$5,000 for an independent engineering review of the Barton-Aschmann study. An additional independent traffic study, he said, would be a duplication of effort and a waste of money. The proposed independent study was a regional study, which Homart did not feel was necessary, Siegel said.

Another Homart representative, Michael O'Brien, said that it was not really the money involved in the independent traffic study that mattered. "I see no problem with contributing the \$45,000 which would be used for the traffic study to a fund for an additional bridge."

Many board members were still not convinced that the traffic to support the shopping center would be able to get to the center.

Siegel again stated that Homart had total confidence in the Barton-Aschmann studies, which indicated that people would be able to get to the center in a reasonably fast and safe manner.

There would be additional traffic, he said, and Homart understood that certain road modifications would be necessary.

"We're putting our money where our consultants mouth is," remarked Siegel.

"We wouldn't put in a center that is impossible to get to or is going to fail. We're confident to the point where we want to go ahead."

Carl Caspers, village engineer for Carpentersville, later stated that there were discrepancies between the state's (Department of Transportation) report and Barton-Aschmann's. "Consequently, it is our feeling that a new study is necessary and essential. My recommendation, said Caspers, "is that that kind of study (independent regional study) is very critical."

Siegel said that if, during the course of reviewing the Barton-Aschmann study, the villages found mistakes, Homart was willing to have them corrected.

Caspers said that if the data which Barton-Aschmann had gathered was 100 percent correct, a review would be acceptable. "We have reason to think the data is wrong."

The question of an independent traffic study seemed to be a closed issue.

Homart had another new proposal to present to the villages at that meeting.

Said Siegel, "You are probably aware that most large industries are undergoing painful reassessments.

"Ours (Homart) was not necessarily painful, but it was a reassessment nevertheless."

Homart then presented a "substantial reduction" in the size of the original project proposal.

Homart's new proposal for the property was 270 acres of development consisting of the shopping center and associated commercial development, with a transitional or mixed use area. The mixed use area would be developed commercially or residentially depending on the market conditions. (See diagrams on page 3.)

The shopping center would remain essentially the same as was previously planned.

This would include 300,000 to 350,000 sq. ft. for the mall area of the center.

As a comparison, it was pointed out that Woodfield is approximately twice this size.

Along with the mall, there would be four major department stores, probably including Sears and Marshall Fields. O'Brien said that the other two stores could not yet be "publicly announced."

These four department stores would make the total size of the shopping center approximately one million square feet.

The question was repeated by Homart. Do you want us or don't you?

The villages split up to caucus with their respective village boards.

When the villages came back together, Glen Gifford, village president of Carpentersville, spoke first.

The Carpentersville village board generally agreed that they did want Homart to come in, with the stipulation that the development company went through the village planning commission regarding such things as traffic problems. Two of the Carpentersville board members still requested an independent traffic study.

Sleepy Hollow voted four to one in favor of having Homart come in, adding that while they would prefer to have an independent traffic study completed, they would agree to a review of the Barton-Aschmann study as long as that was Homart's ultimatum.

Speaking for West Dundee, Ken Aniballi, village president, said that it was his board's choice not to give Homart a decision (as to whether they wanted them in or not) until an independent traffic study was carried out.

With all answers in, Siegel quietly stated, "You leave us no choice. We are withdrawing the application. Thank you for your time."

With that, the Homart representatives packed up their notes and their maps and left the Carpentersville village board room.

Is there still the possibility that Homart will develop the Hill property?

According to Russell Huff, vice-president of communications and public affairs for the Homart Development Co., "We're taking everyone at their word."

He stated that Homart has considered the alternatives, as they have been for quite awhile.

"Being a Chicago based firm, we have a number of sites delineated, and we'll consider these seriously," said Huff.

He continued, "Our interest in the market is as high as ever. We'll be exploring other possibilities there, hoping some other viable alternative is possible.

"We'll never close the door on any negotiations, but promptness is urgent."

Asked if Homart would now wait for the villages to take the initiative in reopening any negotiations, Huff said that Homart made the initiatives which they thought were necessary, explaining everything they could about the (Hill Nursery) site. "Now we are studying other sites."

"If they (villages) want to reopen negotiations, we are available until we are set in another direction."

"Of course, it is natural for us to feel disappointed after working so hard," continued Huff. "But we are still positive about the market area and hopeful about getting into it."



The Village of Algonquin flies it's Bicentennial Flag after Saturday's ceremonies. More photos on page 2.

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