

**SPECIAL SOLON CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
May 11, 2009 – 5:30 P.M.**

The Solon City Council met in special session at City Hall on the above date having been notified at least 24 hours in advance.

Present: Council Members Drucker, Kraus, Pelunis, Russo, Scott, Stolarsky, Suit, Mayor Patton, Clerk McConoughey

Also Present: Planning Director Frankland, Economic Development Manager Dorfman, Planner Fowlie, Planning Commission Members Hrabak and Mazur, former Master Plan Committee Members

Vice Mayor Drucker presided.

Vice Mayor Drucker explained the purpose of this meeting is to provide the Council an opportunity to review and question the Central Retail portion of the proposed Master Plan. The meeting will be rebroadcast to provide an opportunity for public review. Although comments from the public will not be considered this evening, the public will have the opportunity to make comments and ask questions during public hearings which will be scheduled in the future. The Council will also welcome any comments or questions submitted by mail or e-mail. Vice Mayor Drucker noted, however, members of the Planning Commission and former Master Plan Committee are present and will have the opportunity to comment. Vice Mayor Drucker said it is important to note the plan being presented is only a draft, is open for discussion and is not the final plan.

Mr. Frankland explained the Master Plan should be considered a Community Plan. He will present a review of the Central Retail District Plan which provides recommendations for the retail core of the City located in the area along S.O.M. Center Road, Aurora Road and Solon Road.

Additional meetings are scheduled for consideration of a traffic study prepared by Wells & Associates and an economic development plan.

Mr. Frankland said the City's last Master Plan was prepared in 1975, therefore, the new plan will be an entire revision of the previous plan. Subsequent sections of the 27-chapter Master Plan will be released throughout the next few months.

Mr. Frankland provided a brief history of a Master Plan which did not exist prior to the early 1900's and evolved as a result of the Federal government suggesting enabling legislation for zoning. This enabling legislation stated that zoning could only take place in accordance with a comprehensive plan. Most states, including Ohio, adopted language designating that zoning must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan. This began the modern concept of a Master Plan.

Mr. Frankland explained the basic purpose of a Master Plan is to identify the community's general planning strategies, policies and goals in one organized planning document. He clarified that a Master Plan is not a legally binding document. The Plan portrays not what the City will do, but what the City's goals are into the future, including the forethought process. Flexibility is needed within the Master Plan when private property is involved. Master plans are conceptual in nature and details within the Master Plan will require an implementation plan. He provided the example of the Veteran's Memorial Park which was a part of the conceptual Master Plan for many years. Once the Veteran's Memorial Park was approved by the Council, a more detailed plan was established.

Mr. Frankland stated that most Master Plans are prepared following a standardized six-step process and each meeting is part of the process. The process is called the Rational Theory of Planned Preparation and follows a sequential process. Several steps include:

- Gathering information and demographics
- Establishing goals (the primary purpose of the Master Plan Committee)
- Selection of preferred methods to achieve the goals, writing and implementing the plan, and evaluating and amending as needed.
(Currently, the plan writing phase is taking place.)

The Council will review the draft of the Central Retail District and public input is essential for the Master Plan. The community must be involved in the preparation of the Master Plan for it to be successfully implemented.

CHAPTER 5 – STATEMENT OF MASTER PLAN GOALS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES:

Mr. Frankland reviewed Chapter 5 which includes the Master Plan goals, policies and objectives. The goals statement is the most fundamental part of the Plan. There are general statements of community preferences regarding planning. Under modern planning, such goals are prepared by residents allowing community participation and the opportunity to respond to questions from the community.

The Master Plan Committee and the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission established the goals statement. The goals were established based upon input from the Master Plan Committee and information received from the Community Attitude Survey which was mailed to 1 out of every 15 households within the City. The Master Plan Committee has been meeting from 2001 to 2006 to assist with the initial phases of the plan, but primarily the Committee assisted with the Zoning Code. Mr. Frankland expressed his appreciation to the Master Plan Committee for their dedication in establishing the general community priorities. Their commitment has helped the City progress to this stage in the Master Plan.

Mr. Frankland summarized the goal statements outlined in Chapter 5 and said all the Master Plan sections will be based upon the following concepts:

1. Commercial Design Standards – Improve community character through implementation of unifying design concepts throughout the City's commercially zoned areas.

2. Center of Town – Develop a pedestrian-oriented “Center of Town” that will provide an attractive focal point of community identity.
3. Historic Preservation – Protect the City’s heritage through the preservation of significant historical structures.
4. Revision to City Codes and Documents – Implement revisions to support the City’s desired changes in community character, identity and design. (This concept has already begun with the new Zoning Code in 2005.)
5. School District Cooperation – Cooperate with the Solon School District to maintain top quality educational opportunities.
6. Green Areas and Open Spaces – Advance the provision of green areas within residential and non-residential developments, protect environmentally sensitive areas and preserve the natural environment as a community.
7. Senior Citizen Housing – Promote the creation of new senior citizen housing opportunities to enable Solon residents to continue to live within the community. (This concept has already begun.)
8. Property Maintenance – Maintain and improve the condition of the City’s residential and non-residential building stock and neighborhoods.
9. Parks and Recreation – Create parks and other recreational opportunities within new and existing neighborhoods.
10. Industrial Mix – Maintain an appropriate industrial mix in order to maximize revenues, expand tax base and prevent the tax burden on City homeowners from increasing.
11. Pedestrian Amenities – Expand and improve pedestrian amenities in commercial, industrial and residential areas. Identify neighborhoods for additional sidewalks and prioritize their development.
12. Traffic Mitigation – Improve orderly flow of vehicular traffic and the reduction of traffic congestion, particularly along arterial streets and within commercial and residential areas.
13. Alternate Transportation Networks – Implement multi-purpose hike and bike trails to provide connections between neighborhoods, commercial districts, local and regional parks and green areas.
14. Commercial Mix – Provide an appropriate mix of commercial goods and services to meet residents’ diverse shopping needs and to attract those developments to appropriate areas of the City.
15. Commercial/Residential Mix – Seek to achieve the proper balance between residential and non-residential development while protecting residential areas from commercial encroachment.
16. Government Services – Maintain and improve the high quality of municipal service delivery.

CHAPTER 15 – BUSINESS PLANNING SECTORS

Establishes the four basic non-residential geographic planning areas addressed by the Master Plan. The areas include:

- Central Retail District - Route 422/SOM Center Road/Aurora Road area
- Industrial District – Cochran Road/Aurora Road/Solon Road area
- Peripheral Commercial District – Enterprise Parkway and Brainard Road/Miles Road area

- Peripheral Industrial District – Naiman Parkway area

Chapter 15 stresses the importance of the non-residential sectors for providing services, shopping, employment opportunities and entertainment to residents. These areas also provide the tax base for the schools and city services. When one area declines, it will affect other areas, therefore, it is important to maintain viability.

CHAPTER 16 – CENTRAL RETAIL DISTRICT PLAN

The future of this district is a pressing challenge due to aging infrastructure and increased competition in neighboring communities. The plan seeks to answer what general economic development strategies are appropriate for the area, how specific sites within the district are redeveloped, what the appropriate zoning land use pattern for the area is and what types of infrastructure improvements should occur in the district.

Section 1 of Chapter 15 commences the district plan and addresses the analysis of the physical characteristics of the district including the location, the road network that services the district, anchorage within the area, building space, zoning, etc. It establishes certain fundamental planning principles for the area including the principle goal for the district, the principle strategy to achieve the goal and establishes the primary tactic to implement the strategy. It establishes that the principle planning goal for the district should be to achieve quality redevelopment as most buildings in the area are aged. Modern retailers prefer to occupy new buildings rather than older buildings. Redevelopment is essential in all sections of the city and a strategy is necessary.

The primary strategy to achieve the goal is to concentrate on the four core shopping centers as strategic focal points for redevelopment. These four areas include the Sears/Marc's plaza, Uptown Solon, Solon Square Shopping Center and Solar Shopping Center. These core areas serve as anchors for surrounding commercial areas and surrounding retail success is based on the health of these retail areas. Government resources are limited and focus should be on redevelopment of these shopping centers.

The primary tactic to implement the strategy includes redeveloping core shopping centers. The proposed strategy in the Master Plan is to facilitate contact between current shopping center owners and outside developers. The developers have pre-established relationships with groups of retailers and understand implementing a redevelopment project. It was noted that subsidizing will most likely be necessary to redevelop the areas.

Councilman Kraus said as with the proposed mixed use developments from Coral Company and Stark, control of properties is very important. However, the city does not have control of these areas. Councilman Kraus requested further discussion of how the city can gain control in the marketplace.

Mr. Frankland said subsidization is not necessary when there is city control of property, however, cooperation from the core shopping centers' owners is necessary. The owners have expressed interest in redevelopment and Mr. Frankland finds it important to convey to the owners the importance of redevelopment and its role in the Master Plan. He again stated it is difficult to redevelop when private property is involved.

Councilman Scott asked if it would spur redevelopment if the city rezoned certain property. Mr. Frankland said he recommends a planned unit development (PUD) as the preferred redevelopment tool for each of the core shopping centers. Depending on the circumstances involved, voter approval may be necessary, however, it will attract developers.

Councilman Stolarsky asked if a PUD would include residential housing or offices that are currently not permitted.

Mr. Frankland said the PUD is a flexible zoning classification and could involve residential, office, commercial, etc. He added it is possible to create a potential PUD that does not change uses or require a vote.

Councilman Suit said the city has encouraged redevelopment of the shopping centers and stated a grant program is available for retail redevelopment. However, none of the shopping center owners have responded to the opportunity. Mr. Frankland said the city has initiated contact with the plaza owners.

Councilman Scott said the definition of redevelopment may differ to the plaza owners.

Mr. Frankland said developers have contacted the city to redevelop the plaza according to the city's strategies, although the property owners may have different plans for redevelopment.

Councilman Stolarsky said the recent rezoning issue on the ballot was approved and made available the possibility of a larger, freestanding Giant Eagle. He asked if there are any new developments. Mr. Frankland said there have been no applications received.

Councilman Kraus said the plaza owners may not have the ability to redevelop to the city's standards. He believes the city should encourage the property owners to partner with developers. Mr. Frankland said city involvement will reflect support and not opposition to developers.

Councilman Pelunis questioned what subsidies are available aside from a TIF agreement and what type of assistance could the city provide. Mr. Frankland said the city could assume costs of demolition, infrastructure improvements or offset the cost of property acquisition. Increased density may also spur redevelopment. Councilman Pelunis asked if a cap would be recommended for a

subsidy. Mr. Frankland said it could be incorporated into the Master Plan, however, he was unsure he would make that recommendation.

In response to Councilman Russo's inquiry, Mr. Frankland said 60,000 sq ft is the maximum size allowed for a commercial building in the C-3 district, which would not accommodate a super store to attract more shopping traffic. Although a PUD would allow larger buildings, Mr. Frankland does not believe residents would prefer big box stores and in his opinion, the demand for Solon attracts other types of retailers. Mr. Frankland said increased shopping traffic is considered in the proposal.

In response to Councilman Kraus' question, Mr. Frankland said eminent domain is a possibility and should be stated in the Master Plan because the aging commercial areas can affect surrounding areas. Therefore, if the appropriate development is proposed and a property owner will not sell their property, eminent domain consideration is recommended in the Master Plan.

Councilman Suit said eminent domain cannot be used for strictly economic purposes.

Mr. Frankland said it is listed as a possible means of acquiring property and conveys that the city is serious about achieving redevelopment.

Vice Mayor Drucker asked if demand is high for Solon, what prevents retailers from moving to Solon.

Mr. Frankland said larger, modern redevelopment in the core shopping centers is necessary to provide shopping traffic which attracts other retailers. New buildings are also attractive to retailers. Mr. Frankland said the current economic situation makes it difficult to address their needs.

Vice Mayor Drucker believes redevelopment of the core centers should not impose on existing retailers in similar markets.

Mr. Frankland said it is important to rezone property as a planned unit development to control retailers through the development agreement.

Councilman Kraus said a previous study showed that the City is underserved in certain areas. The more vibrant shopping centers are areas to walk around with high shopping traffic. He believes these are the venues and multiple entry points to create.

Mr. Frankland said additional traffic will benefit all shopping centers and if appropriately planned, specialty stores can be successful.

Mr. Frankland said the current market opportunities in southeast Cuyahoga County are well positioned for substantial retail growth as shown in market studies. Although the economic conditions will slow development, Mr. Frankland

said it is important to position the city through the Master Plan process to prepare to act with conceptual development plans when the economy improves.

Alternative uses should be considered in the retail district such as industrial, residential and office. Mr. Frankland finds these inappropriate for the central commercial district, however, they should be reviewed. Residential is not an option because it will strain the school system and opposes the principle to maintain growth. Industrial is not an option in the downtown area and Office use is not an option because it will compete with the current office district, however, a medical office may be appropriate.

Section 2 – Planning/Redevelopment Concepts for the “Core Shopping Centers”

Councilman Kraus referred to a former upscale restaurant in Solon that was located in a plaza a distance from the road and eventually closed. He believes any proposed upscale restaurant should be in a visible area.

Vice Mayor Drucker said former restaurants in the Rusty Bucket location failed and when the Rusty Bucket moved into the storefront, the city allowed extra temporary signs to inform residents of its location. She advised that the city is willing to offer assistance to new restaurants and retailers within reason.

Councilman Kraus has heard comments that Solon lacks quality restaurants and believes it needs to be addressed.

As an example, Mr. Frankland explained a plan displaying a conceptual redevelopment scenario for Solar Center. The pattern proposed one anchor with other buildings closer to the street, with narrower setbacks, pedestrian friendly layouts within the development, parking behind the buildings and a more open development pattern. The specifics would be limited access points with two access points on Aurora Road, 200 feet from the SOM/Aurora intersection. It includes a modern new urbanism layout to the site and an architectural design from the time period of the 1930's and 1940's such as the CVS store with a two-story format. He believes the design would be well received by developers. Councilman Suit questioned if the CVS store should be used an example and Mr. Frankland said the 1930's/1940's era design would be explained.

Councilman Suit questioned how an anchor tenant is defined and if it is by square footage. Mr. Frankland said the anchor tenant should produce enough traffic to support the surrounding buildings. An agreed upon, acceptable square footage in the PUD zoning would need to be established within the measurement of 60,000 to 100,000 square feet.

Councilman Suit said Kruse Commons contains anchor stores that are regional stores and have remained since the construction of the shopping center.

Mr. Frankland said Kruse Commons contains regional stores and such stores do not draw large amounts of traffic. Kruse Drive cannot accommodate a large level of traffic, however, the idea of regional stores can be addressed in the plan by

studying trip generation, but they need to be considered using market and traffic studies. Mr. Frankland said he can address the issue in other ways in the Master Plan if the Council prefers.

Vice Mayor Drucker referred to Mr. Frankland's concept of developers and owners razing certain shopping centers and rebuilding them and asked if that is likely considering tenants of the shopping centers have long leases. As with the Solar Shopping Center rezoning in which the possibility of a freestanding Giant Eagle was discussed, Vice Mayor Drucker does not want to mislead residents with a perception that may not be followed through. She believes residents and the Council would support renovation of the shopping centers.

Mayor Patton stated he, Councilman Kraus and Mr. Frankland met with the owners of Solon and Solar Shopping Centers as well as Giant Eagle and development teams. The concept was to rebuild the Giant Eagle store, however, Mayor Patton believes the economic climate and lack of response from Giant Eagle contribute to the slow progress. Mayor Patton said a new food store is a high priority for the city.

Councilman Russo said the Master Plan is necessary to attract developers to achieve redevelopment of the shopping centers. He suggested limiting a PUD to two of the three shopping centers. Mr. Frankland agreed and suggested redevelopment of the Sears/Marc's plaza as a first priority and the Solon Square Shopping Center as the second priority. Although difficult to achieve, Mr. Frankland believes the plan is ideal. Razing and rebuilding is preferred, however, updating the façade and partial tear-downs are acceptable. He believes the plan should state the preference.

Councilman Suit is pleased that through meetings, the Mayor and Administration have attempted to encourage redevelopment of the shopping centers, which indicates initiative on the city's part to address the retail vacancies.

Councilman Kraus believes Solar Shopping Center should take notice of the Master Plan and understand they are in jeopardy of losing their anchor tenant. The Master Plan gives the shopping center the opportunity to negotiate with Giant Eagle and allows the City to depict to Giant Eagle what the City envisions.

Mr. Frankland proposed the Solar Shopping Center owners consider a connection to the senior housing development to achieve a pedestrian friendly atmosphere. He reiterated his thoughts for the architecture and indicated the zoning would be a planned unit development classification.

Vice Mayor Drucker said it should be realized that the city is open to different architectural designs.

Mr. Frankland suggested verbiage of classical, traditional architectural style as with the other shopping centers. Councilman Suit agreed this would be best.

Vice Mayor Drucker believes the City needs to remain open-minded and flexible when being approached by potential developers whose vision may differ.

Councilman Kraus asked if Mr. Frankland believed this type of redevelopment would spillover to other locations; for example, the Sunoco Station across the street. Mr. Frankland said if the Solar Shopping Center is redeveloped, other areas will definitely follow with redevelopment. This is the theory of concentrating on redeveloping the core shopping center and the peripheral locations will redevelop as well.

Councilman Scott said the square footage of the Solar Shopping Center is approximately 142,000 sq ft and he understands Giant Eagle would like to expand to 100,000 sq ft., which would not leave much square footage for any other businesses. He also questioned if there would be enough parking if the Giant Eagle did expand to 100,000 sq ft and how it would affect the concept of having businesses along SOM Center Road.

Mr. Frankland said representatives for Giant Eagle have attended meetings where various plans regarding parking were discussed and parking at the Solar Shopping Center could be problematic. A large amount of parking is required and there are other areas located in the City that would provide more parking. He said it is a priority to keep a grocery store in the City and the necessary accommodations need to be made in order to do so.

Mayor Patton said that Giant Eagle has expressed an interest in building a new, larger store outside of a shopping center within the City where currently there is no other retail. He said that City personnel have encouraged Giant Eagle to stay at the Solar Shopping Center location since traditionally this is where Solon residents shop. Mayor Patton asked for the Council's feedback regarding a free-standing Giant Eagle.

Vice Mayor Drucker and Councilman Suit said the Council's feedback depends on the location Giant Eagle is considering.

Mr. Frankland said the location Giant Eagle is considering is not conducive to such a large store and Mayor Patton said it is adjacent to only a two-lane road. Mr. Frankland said he is proposing that particular location be re-zoned for office use.

Councilman Suit said he does not support Giant Eagle relocating in a residential area.

Councilman Pelunis agreed that some flexibility is necessary and he does not want to see the City without a grocery store. He feels it is better to have a grocery store in a shopping center since there will be spillover from other businesses. However, if allowing Giant Eagle to build a free-standing store is the only solution to keeping them in the City, he feels the City should seriously consider the proposal. He believes the City should not be without a grocery store and he believes that Giant Eagle does not want to leave the Solon market.

Councilman Scott said Giant Eagle has expressed an interest in building a GetGo gas station and asked if the location under consideration could accommodate this request. Mayor Patton said it is possible, however, it is not a heavily traveled location.

Councilman Scott understands that Giant Eagle would be the destination and he believes this should be carefully considered because Giant Eagle does a great deal of market research, as well as real estate research to find the right location for their stores. If the grocery store and the gas station can be accommodated in this location, the infrastructure in that area would have to be examined to determine the road-type necessary to support it.

Mr. Frankland agreed that it is important that Giant Eagle remains in Solon. He said this is an example of developing undeveloped land for less than it would cost to redevelop currently developed property.

Councilman Suit said he believes some of the other businesses will move out of the Solar Shopping Center if Giant Eagle leaves. He is uncertain what type of leases the other businesses have, however, he is aware that some leases allow smaller retailers to break their lease if the anchor store moves out.

Mr. Frankland agreed and said smaller businesses locate in the shopping center to benefit from the traffic generated by the anchor store.

Mr. Frankland said during a meeting with Giant Eagle representatives, the effect on smaller business in the shopping center if Giant Eagle moves out was discussed and the City encouraged them to stay in the shopping center.

Councilman Stolarsky assumed the GetGo needed to be within a certain radius near the Giant Eagle. He asked if Giant Eagle were to purchase the former Sunoco station near the current Giant Eagle, would the zoning be grandfathered or would it create a new zoning issue. Mr. Frankland said under the current zoning, a gas station can only be placed in a C-4 zone and the property in question is not zoned C-4.

Mr. Frankland said that Uptown Solon is a newer shopping center and does not require any redevelopment during the time span of the Master Plan except for possible façade updates. The Master Plan indicates that Uptown Solon should remain a neighborhood shopping center. He recommended that offsite directional signage for Uptown Solon be provided at some of the major intersections and indicated that a signage plan is provided at the end of the Master Plan document.

Mr. Frankland explained that the two proposed development plans in the Master Plan for Solon Square are similar to the plan for the Solar Shopping Center. One proposal is for the existing Solon Square site and includes an anchor with buildings surrounding the periphery and moving some of the access points from their current locations. This includes the existing one on Solon Boulevard, an

access point on Aurora Road which is moved 150' west of the current access, one on Station Street and one on Melbury. Traditional, classical architecture is proposed. The current Solon Square building design was typical for the 1960's and does not benefit the surrounding areas as it should. Therefore, any redevelopment should integrate the development into the properties to the east and west.

Mr. Frankland displayed a second proposal which he prefers. He has spoken with developers in the area who have indicated Solon is a high demand location for business owners wishing to locate in new buildings and they are interested in pursuing a PUD layout. This proposal integrates the properties to the east and west which may occur gradually within the next ten to fifteen years. The redevelopment would be from Solon Road to SOM Center Road with Solon Boulevard as a through street due to the elimination of Melbury Avenue. It would be a pedestrian type of development and neighborhood. The proposal also indicates the possibility of vacating Station Street and Melbury Avenue which would be a good location for parking. The suggested zoning for this type of development would be a PUD to provide the city with the necessary control.

Councilman Kraus was concerned about Map 16-2-B and felt businesses might be attracted to the location but restaurants would not unless the area included SOM Center Road. He feels developers would prefer Map 16-2-C.

Mr. Frankland agreed Map 16-2-C would be a better choice and clarified the development would only happen in phases with Solon Square being the first phase and the second phase would be extended to SOM Center Road.

5. Marc's/Sears/Carter Lumber Retail Area:

Mr. Frankland displayed Map 16-2-D which is unique because it is the only semi-regional shopping center located in the City. The center is approximately 35 years old with 201,000 sq ft on 20 acres and is accessible from Route 422 and visible from SOM Center Road. The proposal is for a mixed-use development of a regional nature to include a pedestrian-friendly type development with a street-grid pattern. The size would be similar to First and Main in Hudson and smaller than the Coral Company proposal.

Mr. Frankland said this area should be the City's priority for redevelopment. This location is the key to the redevelopment of all the other shopping areas and it could attract many other retailers to the City.

Vice Mayor Drucker is concerned about the remaining neighborhoods bordering a mixed-use development and referenced page 22 which indicated buildings should be located at least 40 feet from the property line of residential areas. She believes 40 feet is an inadequate residential buffer.

Mr. Frankland agreed and is confident that a setback of more than 40 feet could be provided to residential areas.

Councilman Kraus said residents from the adjacent neighborhoods have expressed their concern over noise issues associated with the current shopping center. Councilman Kraus said currently, the appearance of the shopping center and the retail stores is not the ideal gateway to Solon. The Coral Company's vision to create a new gateway to the City was very attractive and achieving something similar on a smaller scale will attract a more exclusive type of retail. Councilman Kraus feels this is the location those retailers would be interested in since it is easily accessible from Route 422. He feels this type of redevelopment is overdue.

Councilman Suit feels the residents located closest to the mixed-used development will be better situated with the addition of upscale retail. Currently, those residents whose property abuts the businesses must contend with the loading docks and the associated noise. The mixed-use development site plan eliminates roadways behind the businesses and, therefore, eliminates loading docks.

Councilman Suit asked Mr. Frankland if the PUD's would be included in the Zoning Code prior to a developer presenting a development plan to the City. Mr. Frankland explained it depends on how the PUD is written. The City's Charter requires voter approval for expanding uses within a district.

Councilman Suit questioned once the Master Plan is approved, should a PUD classification be added to the Zoning Code as soon as possible before a developer presents a development plan.

Mr. Frankland agreed and said this is emphasized throughout the Master Plan. From a planning perspective, a slower economy is the ideal time to determine long-range goals and plan strategies. Once the economy improves, the City will be prepared for new development if the PUD classification is included within the Zoning Code.

Councilman Scott referred to Map 16-2-D and questioned the northern limit. Mr. Frankland said the railroad right-of-way is the northern limit.

Councilman Scott asked when there will be too much B space in the City. Mr. Frankland said it is possible because there will be more demand to be in the City with this type of development. He also hopes that Solar or Solon Square gets additional B space projects. Mr. Frankland said this would not be in addition to retail but would replace existing retail. He said any time there is redevelopment, the developer will request higher density which relates to critical mass.

The overall amount of retail square footage would increase in the City but it will be replacing existing retail.

Councilman Scott asked how the Solar Center would be affected if Aurora Road is redeveloped in accordance with the plan. Mr. Frankland said this will pressure Solar Center to redevelop their shopping center in accordance with the others that are being redeveloped. Mr. Frankland said once the redevelopment takes

place, the demand for retail will be evident. However, the question will be whether the City's infrastructure can accommodate the demand.

Mayor Patton said he understands one of the major challenges to redeveloping the Marc's/Sears Grand Center is that there is no common control because there are multiple owners. Mr. Frankland agreed and said this was a major challenge when the Coral Company was planning their development. He said the Master Plan encourages common ownership for that shopping center. However, he is unsure how this can be achieved.

Councilman Stolarsky questioned what would be included in the proposed mixed-use development for the Marc's/Sears Grand location and if it would include residential over retail. Mr. Frankland said it is possible it would include residential over retail, however, he would not suggest including any free-standing residential. He explained the type of tenant desiring residential over retail is less likely to have children. Families with children are more inclined to prefer free standing homes and attracting more children is a legitimate concern for the school administration.

Councilman Stolarsky feels this is the best location for a mixed-use development. Although the Coral Company's development grew to be very large, the location was desirable and blended with municipal uses such as the Art Center and Fire Station in with a pedestrian friendly mixed-use development.

Mr. Frankland said the area located at the corner of Bainbridge Road and SOM Center Road is considered to be the center of town and can be integrated into the properties around it which will blend in well with this site.

Councilman Kraus believes that gaining control over the properties will present the biggest challenge as observed with the Coral Project. He feels the residential over retail living accommodations will help attract young professionals to the area and potentially keep Solon graduates from relocating. Currently, there is nowhere within the City for this group to locate.

Mr. Frankland said the goal statement indicates senior housing is desirable and it should also include housing for young professionals.

Councilman Kraus explained it would allow recent graduates to move back to their hometown or locally if more young professional style housing was available.

Section 3 –The "Center of Town" Concept:

This location involves the new Fire Station oriented towards the intersection. All of the surrounding buildings reflect the architecture of The Solon Center for the Arts Building and the Veterans' Memorial Park is located in the front. The Walgreen's store matches the architecture and the Historical Society. The Master Plan recommends that at some point, the City may consider restoring the Historical Society building back to its original 1905 appearance which Mr. Frankland indicated on a photograph. Maintenance will be required on the

Historical Society building in the future and it might be possible at that time to restore it in conjunction with an outdoor cultural event center. This would coordinate with the Solon Center for the Arts building located directly across the street and the Solon Bull Home Museum for Solon artifacts.

Mr. Frankland noted the reconfiguration of Bainbridge Road would impact the outdoor cultural event center and the Historic Society building might need to be relocated.

Councilman Suit stated there are serious challenges involved with the realignment of the Bainbridge Road/SOM Center Road intersection and the project may not be completed. Therefore, the Center of Town plan should consider proceeding with or without the realignment.

Mr. Frankland said the Master Plan has a diagram of this location without the realignment. However, he recommended adding an alternative diagram to the Master Plan with the realignment to be used for comparison.

Vice Mayor Drucker agreed that both diagrams should be included in the Master Plan. Although she agrees an outdoor cultural event center is a great concept, she does not believe the proposed location is the right area because of its proximity to the Fire Station and the high traffic area. Vice Mayor Drucker believes that type of center would be more desirable in the Community Park and it would enhance the appearance of the park. She suggested the Solon Center for the Arts could hold the "Chill & Grill" there. As an example, Vice Mayor Drucker referred to the ground breaking ceremony for the Senior Housing Project on Aurora Road. The speakers could not be heard over the traffic and the emergency sirens.

Mr. Frankland understood Vice Mayor Drucker's concerns, however, mentioned that most of the concerts would occur on weekends when the traffic is not as heavy. Although the area may not be an ideal location for an outdoor event center, it might be beneficial as a green space area to hold art shows and similar events.

Section 4 – Future Commercial Zoning Plan – Recommendations for the Central Retail District:

Mr. Frankland displayed a diagram indicating the existing zoning in the area. He reviewed problems with the current zoning layout which have evolved over the past forty years. He explained when determining zoning, lower intensity uses should progress to a higher intensity approaching the center of town. When leaving town, there should be higher intensity to lower intensity when approaching residential areas

Mr. Frankland said this is the second most common commercial classification in the Central Retail District of the City. He said a new zoning plan must be implemented for the downtown area. There are 5 zoning classifications within the Central Retail District that would be classified as higher intensity, heavy

commercial zonings, which include C-2 (borderline) and C-3, C-4, C-6, I-2 (high intensity).

Mr. Frankland said there is no moderate intensity zoning classifications and there are two low intensity commercial classifications in the City. The two low intensity commercial classifications are Office zoning and the Historic District. However, they are not typical transitional-type commercial zoning.

The new zoning plan should include one or two low intensity commercial zoning classifications. He said a transitional commercial classification in the Historic District and the Office District should be maintained. Mr. Frankland indicated a moderate intensity commercial classification should be added and only one centralized high intensity classification. This will require further study and it will be difficult to achieve.

Mr. Frankland displayed a layout and said the proposal is as follows:

- O-1 - Office – this is an existing office classification that is functioning well.
- CS-2 – Commercial Service 2 – this is a transitional light commercial zoning classification which would be used along secondary roadways when abutting residential uses and where low traffic generating uses are desirable. He said that the City does not currently have a transitional low intensity classification.
- CS-3 – Moderate Intensity classification
- CS-4 – Heavy Commercial classification

Mr. Frankland said he would address the expansion of commercial zoning. As a matter of principle, expanding commercial zoning is not desired and the Master Plan Committee indicated the expansion of zoning should be approached carefully and without disturbing residential development. Although Mr. Frankland agrees, he indicated there are areas in the City where some expansion is necessary and provided the following examples:

- SOM Center Road – Mr. Frankland indicated on a site plan an area that has been rezoned, which includes the proposed Giant Eagle site, and office uses with the Hebrew School and the library. On the opposite side of SOM Center beginning at Baldwin Road, it is zoned residential. As a result of the street being widened and the uses on the opposite side of the street, the value of these residential properties is becoming questionable and consideration should be given to changing the zoning to light office use.
- Aurora Road – Mr. Frankland indicated on the site plan the area across from Melbury Street and Solon Boulevard where apartments are located. High intensity commercial zoning is located on one side of Aurora Road and on the opposite side, there is residential zoning. Mr. Frankland recommended this area be rezoned to the new CS-2 zoning which is the Transitional Commercial Zoning and would include protection for the residential properties as it pertains to buffering and types of allowable uses.

Mr. Frankland also indicated an additional area nearby that is zoned high intensity commercial that abuts residential zoning and recommended this area also be rezoned to the CS-2 zoning.

Vice Mayor Drucker clarified residents in the above mentioned residential district will not be forced out of their homes to rezone the area to a commercial classification. The Master Plan needs to be sensitive to the residents in these areas. Mr. Frankland said some residents in the area will approve of the rezoning, however, the residents abutting the area will have concerns because non-residential uses will abut their property. However, residential uses can remain in the office zoning location and will not be impacted.

Councilman Stolarsky asked whether Aurora Road and SOM Center Road provide a natural break so as not to extend the zoning on the other side of the street. Mr. Frankland said that from a textbook planning perspective, residential on one side of the street and high intensity commercial on the other side is not considered good planning.

Mr. Frankland said although the Master Plan is not binding, the City should carefully consider the contents before approval to avoid possible legal issues by developers seeking a rezoning that is not desired by the city, but may be included in the Master Plan.

Councilman Suit said on the south side of Aurora Road across from the Solon Square Shopping Center, the proposed Master Plan would allow standard restaurants. Councilman Suit is concerned with a standard restaurant being located against a residential area. He feels it is inappropriate to allow a restaurant immediately adjacent to backyards of residences.

Mr. Frankland said this can lead to concerns as a result of deliveries and the dumpsters located in the back. However, the proposal would not allow fast food, including pizza shops. The restaurant would have to be a sit-down style and if the Council has concerns, this usage could be eliminated from the district.

Councilman Suit said there are other areas within the district where this would be appropriate and recommended a clause prohibiting restaurants from locating adjacent to a residential area.

Mr. Frankland said it is possible to add different requirements and setbacks from adjacent residential uses.

Councilman Suit indicated Section C-4 on the site plan where Uptown Solon is located and noted immediately to the west is a residential area which may be adversely affected. Mr. Frankland said that area will be addressed during discussion of the Industrial Core Section of the Plan which will propose a different type of zoning.

Vice Mayor Drucker asked about the McDonalds and their lack of a drive-thru and questioned if this was due to the residents being located behind them. It was

noted there is inadequate space for a drive-thru and Mr. Frankland said a drive-thru in this area would pose problems.

Councilman Suit said he is concerned with the effects of vermin, deliveries, dumpsters, etc., on abutting residents and said these are problems that exist with standard restaurants as well as drive-thru restaurants.

Councilman Kraus shares Councilman Suit's concerns. He has spoken with residents whose property abuts that area and they have expressed concern about existing businesses. He feels they would have more concerns if restaurants were allowed to locate in the area.

Mr. Frankland said if there is opposition to including restaurants, they can be removed from the Plan.

Councilman Scott referred to the O-1 zoning on the south side of SOM Center Road where homes are currently located and asked what is envisioned for that area. Mr. Frankland said the most logical use for the area would be to convert the homes into small offices. Mr. Frankland said this would be more viable if the land behind the homes was owned by the City, however, this would encroach too far into the residential area and compromise the area.

Councilman Scott was concerned if the area was zoned office and a plan for a large office building was presented, it may infringe on the residents. Mr. Frankland said the size would pose the problem and not the office use. Mr. Frankland said the sites are very narrow and the most viable use for them would be to make them small offices. If it is stipulated that the offices had to remain a certain size, it would require a new zoning classification.

Councilman Pelunis questioned the concept of renovating homes into offices and said it might be cost prohibitive. He said certain requirements including ADA, would have to be met and it may be less expensive to demolish the homes to build offices.

Mr. Frankland indicated on a site plan the C-1 Historic District which includes Bainbridge Road and Kruse Drive. The proposal for that location is to extend the Historic District to Kruse Drive. Therefore, the properties on the south side of Kruse Drive to Solon Road would be Historic District zoning to provide more logical boundaries to the district and provide pedestrian-friendly types of development. This plan would expand that concept. However, the concern is that the south side of Kruse Drive is now zoned C-2 which is a higher intensity zoning.

Mr. Frankland said another proposal for that location could be extending the C-1 Historic District zoning from the corner of the west side of Solon Road to the east side of Solon Road and lining it up with City Hall. He said there are historic century homes located in this area and the zoning would provide better use of the land, as well as protecting the homes. Mr. Frankland said under C-1 zoning, a house cannot be torn down without the Planning Commission and City Council's

approval. He said it would be advantageous to have a light commercial use in the area in conjunction with the institutional use of City Hall.

Mr. Frankland referred to the many uses on Solon Road previously discussed and said this proposal for future use would change that area to office use. He said this would be a non-conforming use which has other issues. However, from a planning perspective, this would be the best way to determine the zoning use.

Mr. Frankland indicated on a site plan the area designated for light transitional commercial zoning at Solon Road and SOM Center Road. He said this is currently a mixture of zoning classifications and his proposal would be for this area to be zoned CS-2, a low intensity commercial classification which would permit most of the current uses.

Councilman Suit referred to a prior site plan of the Sears Grand/Marc's Plaza which indicated redevelopment of that area with the addition of a PUD. He asked if it would be feasible for the developer to acquire additional property to the north which, under the new proposal, would be zoned for office use. He asked if the developer acquired the property which had been rezoned office, would a PUD be allowed in that area.

Mr. Frankland agreed with Councilman Suit that this may be a contradiction in the plan. He said the Master Plan recommends the Sears Grand/Marc's Plaza redevelopment have two cross access points and the PUD would extend around the corner onto properties currently zoned non-residential. Mr. Frankland will further review the plan and address the issue.

Councilman Kraus said the extension of the development around Solon Road and SOM Center was a very attractive aspect to the development plan. He said it creates a gateway point for the area. Mr. Frankland said it would also increase the view from Route 422.

Mr. Frankland said the draft Master Plan is very preliminary. He encouraged the Council to carefully consider the plan. His intent was to provide areas of particular interest for the Council to review.

Section 5 – Existing and Future Land Use Plans:

Mr. Frankland said maps which reflect the future zoning map are included in this section for the Council's review.

Section 6 – Infrastructure Policies Within the Central Retail District:

Mr. Frankland said this section is primarily based upon recommendations from the Public Works Director and the Director of Engineering.

1. SOM/Bainbridge Road Intersection Improvements: Mr. Frankland said two conceptual alternatives are illustrated. The intersection should be realigned to a 90-degree configuration and would require property

acquisition and/or redevelopment.

Councilman Suit referred to "Map 16-6-C" and questioned the traffic flow going eastbound and coming in at an angle to Bainbridge Road. He said this would make it difficult to see traffic coming from the direction of City Hall.

Although Mr. Frankland understood Councilman Suit's concern, he said the map was created by the Engineering and Public Works Departments and, therefore, he could not comment on it.

2. SOM Center/Aurora Road Intersection Improvements
3. SOM Center/Solon Road Intersection Improvements: Mr. Frankland said the addition of turning lanes at these two locations would increase the level of service. However, this would include right-of-way acquisition and will be included in the Traffic Master Plan.
4. Solon Road Widening: It is recommended that Solon Road between SOM Center Road and Aurora Road be widened to add an additional eastbound and westbound lane. This would be necessary for the redevelopment of Solon Square Shopping Center. This would also include right-of-way acquisition.
5. Aurora Road/US 422 Connector Road: This issue needs further exploration. It will alleviate further traffic issues on SOM Center Road. However, the location is unclear and would need to be addressed by the City's traffic engineer.

Councilman Kraus said future redevelopment will help to determine the location of a connector road. Mr. Frankland said a developer would be inclined to have the connector road be located near their development to bring in traffic rather than having it near a residential area. Mr. Frankland feels east of SOM Center is the best location for a connector road because this is where the majority of traffic originates.

6. "Bob Evans" Service Road: This has been considered by the City for many years. The plan is to install a service road leading from the Bob Evans drive, extend it behind the buildings that front on SOM Center Road and exit at the SOM Center/Kruse Drive access drive. This is an alternative access point leading to a signalized intersection onto SOM Center/Kruse Drive.
7. Increase Capacity on US 422 and Solon Ramps: Mr. Frankland said it has been determined that many of the problems with the level of service on the City's roadways are due to the level of service on Route 422 and the access ramps. Although the City does not control Route 422, the City needs to support increases in capacity and the access ramps.

8. Widen Bainbridge Road to Three Lanes: Although a 3-lane road would facilitate traffic flow, it is unlikely this would happen due to the lack of setback available for existing buildings.

Councilman Suit said there would be little room for any streetscaping on Bainbridge Road in the Historic District if the streets were widened. Mr. Frankland agreed and said it would also compromise the character of the Historic District.

9. Boulevard Configuration for SOM Center Road: If redevelopment occurs from Route 422 to Bainbridge Road, a boulevard approach, which would provide the City with a dramatic gateway, is recommended for SOM Center Road.
10. Install Pedestrian/Bicycle Lanes and Paths Within the CRD as Opportunities Arise: This would benefit the pedestrian friendly environment, however, right-of-way acquisition would be necessary. It is recommended the City pursue the installation of multi-purpose paths along the Norfolk Southern Railroad right-of-way line.
11. Implement Underground Utilities as Opportunities Arise: This is a long-range project and to defray costs, should be done in conjunction with re-development.
12. Remove/Replace Norfolk Southern Railroad Bridge: It is recommended the railroad bridge be removed and the road be brought up to grade. However, if a multipurpose path is installed, a pedestrian bridge would be necessary to cross over SOM Center Road.
13. Provide all Storm Water Retention On Site: It is recommended that any re-development be required to make provisions to retain its storm water on site.
14. Sanitary Sewer Master Plan: This should be incorporated into the Master Plan as well as all other future plans for the City.

Section 7 – Streetscape Concepts for the CRD:

Two design concepts are proposed throughout the Central Retail District.

Standard CRD Streetscape Design Concept: This is a variation of the SOM Center Road streetscaping which would include streetscaping on SOM Center Road at Aurora Road and Solon Road and any other portion of SOM Center within the CRD that is not currently streetscaped. This would be part of a redevelopment project and would include the inlaid bricks and patio areas. The primary difference from the SOM Center Streetscaping is the vertical element, rather than the bollards. Benches are recommended with wrought iron fences around the sitting areas.

Mr. Frankland said a similar design will be used on Solon Road through SOM Center to Aurora Road to the boundary of the CRD to Solon Road.

The balance of the streetscaping in this area will be installed in the Historic District and would include paver sidewalks, patio areas with sitting benches, fencing and landscaping and historic district lighting. Mr. Frankland proposes that this be undertaken as a city project so that all the pavers in the area are uniform.

Councilman Stolarsky asked if there is an estimated cost to the streetscaping. Mr. Frankland was unsure, however, said the Engineering Department could determine the cost based upon the cost of the SOM Center Streetscaping. Mr. Frankland said the Historic District streetscaping is important because this area is improving and should be considered when it is economically viable.

US 422/SOM Center Road Conceptual: This is a proposal to extend the SOM Center Road streetscaping to the Route 422 interchange area because the streetscaping goes into the Central Retail District where people are entering the City from the highway ramps. It is recommended that planting beds and "Welcome to Solon" signage be installed leading into this district.

Councilman Stolarsky believes ODOT controlled those locations. Mr. Frankland said ODOT does control the locations and the City would require ODOT's permission to install the streetscaping. He noted that the City currently maintains this area.

Councilman Scott said in the past, permission was granted provided the City maintain anything installed.

Councilman Suit said ODOT sometimes provides trees and that they were provided in Bainbridge at Routes 306 and 422.

Section 8 – Standardized Public Signage Plan:

Three types of standardized signage are proposed for the retail district.

1. "Central Retail District" Identification Signage – Mr. Frankland indicated a display which would be located at the points where the major roads enter the CRD. All the signs will be similar in design.
2. Street Identification Signage – Mr. Frankland displayed two types of signage which would be mounted at signalized intersections with mast arms and mounted on poles at non-signalized intersections.
3. Directional Signage – This signage would direct visitors to various locations throughout the City, such as "Solon City Hall" and would be posted at major intersections. Mr. Frankland said by using the same signage throughout the CRD, it creates a unique sense of community.

Councilman Suit said after reviewing the map for the "Directional Signage" there may be additional areas that would benefit from them. Mr. Frankland said the Council can make those amendments.

Mr. Frankland said this is a lengthy and detailed section of the Master Plan which the Council should thoroughly review. It establishes goals and strategies and emphasizes that the City needs to be proactive to achieve redevelopment.

Councilman Suit commended Mr. Frankland for his efforts. He said previous suggestions have been to hire a consultant to prepare a Master Plan in which he did not favor. Councilman Suit feels it is important for a Master Plan to be prepared by someone familiar with the City's goals and issues. He said this is the first time a Master Plan has been proposed by a City representative and it was very well done.

Mr. Frankland thanked his staff for their assistance and hard work.

Vice Mayor Drucker asked Mr. Frankland the procedures for approving the plan. Mr. Frankland said it might be possible to adopt sections of the plan if the Council approves or wait until the entire document has been completed. Mr. Frankland said he would prefer to adopt the sections individually, allowing them to be in the Code. Therefore, if proposals were recommended, the City zoning would be in place. He said although the plan is not a binding document, it has value as a legal consequence and courts are not inclined to favor against a community's Master Plan.

Vice Mayor Drucker said it will be necessary to schedule public hearings for resident input and input from other organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Planning Commission. After the public hearings are held, the Council can proceed with approval of the Master Plan.

Mr. Frankland explained that he planned to have public hearings with the Planning Commission and the Council.

Councilman Kraus also commended Mr. Frankland and said preparation of the Master Plan required many years of research and numerous meetings with different groups. He believes it is important to listen to public comments and to incorporate what was learned during the Coral Project into the plan. Councilman Kraus said during the Coral Project, he frequently heard that redevelopment of the City's retail areas are needed.

Councilman Suit said the "Central Retail District" requires the most assistance. He feels the plan should be approved by sections as it is agreed upon and in the event an opportunity for development is presented, the guidelines will be prepared. This section is particularly important and should be approved as soon as possible.

Councilman Stolarsky added his commendation to Mr. Frankland and to those involved in the preparation of the Master Plan. Although he feels the adoption of

the plan is important, he does not believe a developer would delay proceeding with a project in Solon if the Master Plan was incomplete. He believes some of the sections will be interplayed and prefers to adopt the complete plan.

Councilman Scott thanked Mr. Frankland and everyone who assisted in the preparation of the Master Plan and said this is invaluable information. He believes this section should be adopted as soon as possible and can be provided to developers expressing an interest in redevelopment.

Motion by Councilman Suit, seconded by Councilman Pelunis to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 P.M.

Roll Call: Aye: Drucker, Kraus, Pelunis, Russo, Scott, Stolarsky, Suit

Nay: None

Motion Carried

Vice Mayor

Clerk of Council