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TIF district could finance Trueman Boulevard extension

By KEVIN CORVO

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52

Hilliard City Council members are expected to consider a proposed tax-increment-financing district for Vision Development's proposed 218-unit apartment complex north of Davidson Road and east of Interstate 270 when they return from summer recess next month.

Legislation establishing a 10-year, 75 percent TIF was introduced at the July 13 meeting of the economic- and entrepreneurial-development committee.

David Meeks, Hilliard's economic-development director, said the TIF would generate \$6.2 million, an amount virtually equal to the debt service for the extension of Trueman Boulevard north from Davidson Road to Edwards Farms Drive in Columbus.



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"This TIF allows us to build (the extension) of Trueman Boulevard," Meeks said.

The proposed TIF follows the Hilliard Planning and Zoning Commission's approval last month to rezone 15.9 acres from commercial to planned-unit development, a process that was more than a year in the making.

Vision Development had sought 381 apartments in March 2014, then after multiple postponements, sought approval for 281 apartments. The planning and zoning commission last November voted 5-1 to reject that plan and give it a negative recommendation.

Rather than attempt to persuade City Council to reverse the negative recommendation, Vision opted to present a new plan in June for 218 apartments on 13.9 acres with 2 acres set aside for commercial uses. It was approved 6-0 by the commission.

The City Council committee members on July 13 voted 2-1, with Les Carrier dissenting, to forward the TIF-authorizing legislation to the full City Council meeting. It received a first reading but no discussion July 13, the last scheduled meeting before summer recess.

The TIF legislation is scheduled for a second reading and public hearing Aug. 24.

Meeks estimated the value of construction of The Pointe, the 218-unit apartment complex on the 13.9 acres, at \$21 million.

He estimated the value of construction of the 2-acre commercial portion of the development at \$1.5 million.

The total \$22.5 million value of the 15.9 acres would generate estimated annual real-estate taxes of almost \$831,000, according to Meeks.

After the county auditor's office collects a fee of about \$22,000 from the expected incremental tax value, the TIF terms would be applied to about \$809,000, Meeks said.

Under the terms, 75 percent, or about \$607,000, would be redirected annually to the TIF, he said.

Within the redirected amount, about \$384,000 would be redirected from the Hilliard school district and \$87,000 from Norwich Township. The rest would be drawn from among the other local taxing agencies, he said.

Twenty-five percent of that remaining incremental tax value, or almost \$202,000, would be paid annually as usual to the taxing districts, including about \$128,000 to the school district, about \$29,000 to the township and almost \$51,000 to other local entities, Meeks said.

The annual real-estate tax for the site total of 48 unimproved acres -- of which the 15.9 acres are a part -- is \$4,437, Meeks said, including \$2,683 doled out to the school district and \$603 to the township.

The 27 acres remaining would be on the west side of the Trueman Boulevard extension and would remain zoned for commercial uses, Meeks said.

He estimated the 27 acres between I-270 and the new section of Trueman Boulevard would be worth about \$30 million when fully developed, with an estimated real-estate tax value of almost \$1.1 million.

The site is expected to generate about 800 to 950 new jobs with a combined estimated payroll of \$27 million to \$33 million, and it would create estimated annual income-tax withholdings of \$550,000 to \$660,000, according to Meeks.

"I'm impressed with the enhanced value this development will create (and) it will be a real shot in the arm for Mill Run," said councilman Bill Uttley, a member of the committee.

But Carrier said he opposes the proposed TIF because it is applied to residences.

"If it's for apartments, the developer should pay to build the road," Carrier said after the meeting adjourned.

If the TIF is approved, Carrier said, he would consider a voter referendum.

City Council on July 13 considered two other ordinances related to Vision Development, each forwarded from respective committees immediately prior to the session.

An ordinance rezoning about 21 acres from commercial zoning to planned-unit development -- the amount includes 16 acres to be developed and approximately 5 acres for infrastructure -- received a first reading, as did an ordinance authorizing Meeks to enter into a developer's agreement with Vision Development.

Both ordinances are scheduled for a second reading and public hearing Aug. 24.

Connie Klema, an attorney representing Vision Development, was present but did not address City Council.

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Communities

The EAA- Enough Apartments Already!!

I understand the need to have all types of housing options for our residents. However, our city leadership is on record in supporting the use of apartment projects in order to finance the building of roads. The Vision Development has little to do with housing types or even the need for a particular housing type. I continue to hear from development leaders and our city officials “this is what the consumer wants”. Well, I am just not sure this is what our community wants— It might be what MORPC (Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission) wants, but I do not think it is what the taxpayers of Hilliard wish for; more apartments to pay for infrastructure! No community member has come asking we allow the building of more apartments on prime commercial highway real estate. In fact, most of the feedback I hear relates to concern regarding how many apartments the city has already approved.

Taxpayers paying for the road connector-(Trueman Blvd at Davidson Road)

The proposed Vision development is an example of a project that simply does not provide a win for the community. Ordinance 15-31 and the companion tax legislation, Ordinance 15-32, propose to change zoning for a parcel of land from commercial use to high density residential; and to allow for the property taxes to be used to build the road the developer needs to build and connect the apartments (TIF). By diverting these property taxes, the community/taxpayers will be asked to subsidize the services for the residents of the apartment complex (Education of children and Fire/EMS Services). This is the expense side to the TIF (Tax Incremental Financing) of highly dense residential projects. A residential TIF of this nature brings no jobs, just greater service needs without enough accompanying property tax revenue.

School Redistricting-

Some may ask, why is this guy sending me this email? Folks, if you think this does not have an impact on you or your area of the community, I want to assure you it absolutely does!! One project can be absorbed, but when you support the policy of high density housing at any cost (e.g. Anderson Meadows, Hilliard Grand, Wilcox Condo’s, Tremont Club –All using residential TIF’s to finance infrastructure), it will have a direct and lasting impact. If any of you lived in our community during the discussion of the need for the third high school, you know that these projects simply add demand for services, and the diversion of the taxes exacerbates the fiscal issues associated with residential growth. For example, I worry about the folks in Beacon, Weston Trails. and Darby Glen. It is not inconceivable, some in the community possibly being assigned to another portion of the Hilliard City School district. (Karr Farms zoning request is coming-possibly adding 150 to 200 children just west of Davidson). When you take a moment and understand the current course of high density development in the Davidson portion of the district alone, the city has added or is adding over 1500 apartment units. Weaver Middle School and Davidson High School are full. This has every bit to do with the entire community, not just those in Davidson Run. Make no mistake, our neighbors in Davidson Run and River Run need our support, but soon your portion of the community may need the same type of support.

Our Fire Services-

Some may be surprised to know, the use of a TIF can divert property taxes away from a township for 30 years. In fact, on our current City Council agenda, we are reviewing a request to divert property taxes from the Tremont Club development for another 20 years, to pay for infrastructure for the abandoned development across the street (Hickory Chase- Another TIF tragedy). How many EMS runs do you think our firefighters have made to Tremont Club? How many runs do you think the Firefighters/EMS teams will make to Stonegate development over on Trueman Blvd. across from Target?

Everyone wants responsible growth and development. Some of our leaders would advocate we need these High Density Developments to create the infrastructure for the commercial growth to come. It is somewhat the chicken and the egg--Which comes first? I believe we can do better than Vision as currently proposed. This type of Development undermines our value, our proposition as a community.

On August 19th , at 7pm in the Norwich Township Safety Building, Paul Lambert, Hilliard City School Board Member, Larry Earman, Norwich Township Trustee. and I plan to be available for any community members who wish to better understand the impacts of these development projects. We plan to have small break out sessions so you can hear the impacts from various elected members of our community. We will also be discussing ways we can stop this taxing policy, including, referendum initiative for community approval of the Vision proposal, and possible Hilliard City Charter changes to limit TIF use on future residential proposals. For information regarding types of changes other communities have utilized, look no further that Worthington and Powell. Both communities are going through very similar development challenges.

Most importantly, I ask you to attend City Council meeting on August 24th , at City Hall starting at 7pm. You will be asked to sign in and have a limited amount of time to speak, but it is very important our leaders understand we have had Enough Apartments Already! Please forward this email to neighbors and friends you know who may also be interested in these issues as well.

Finally, please be respectful of your community leaders, as all of them spend an incredible amount of time in making this community a great place to live. Name calling, and personal attacks take away from the underlying substantive issues. Some of these decisions are very hard to make, and we all benefit from understanding all perspectives.

Real People Real Possibilities.

If I emailed you twice, apologies. If you wished to be removed from this email list, no worries, just send me a note.

Respectfully,

Les Carrier

Hilliard City Council, Member

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