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Business park may drive growth

Sewer line part of plan in eastern Jefferson

By **Bill Pike**
bpike@courier-journal.com
The Courier-Journal

Covering 283 acres, a business park planned on farmland just east of Tucker Station Road near Jeffersontown would be big -- but its implications would be much bigger.

It would open an area for development that's larger than St Matthews.

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The business park could bring sewers to a 4.6-square-mile area -- 3,000 acres -- that spans the Snyder Freeway between Taylorsville Road and Interstate 64.

Some people say development of the area is inevitable and could be a plus if it's done right. But some neighbors and environmentalists say that sewers could



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Greg Oakley, left, and John Hollenbach looked at plans in the part of eastern Jefferson County that will be opened to development after the installation of a sewer main. The two are seeking permission to build a business park in the area. (By Bill Luster, The Courier-Journal)

HEARING TONIGHT

What: A Louisville Metro Planning Commission public hearing on John Hollenbach and Greg Oakley's proposal for a 283-acre business park east of Tucker Station Road.

When: 7 tonight

Where: East Government Center, 200 Juneau Drive in Middletown

What's next: After the hearing, the commission will make a recommendation to the Louisville Metro Council, which will

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change the area for the worse and that there should have been a public debate about the project.

Stephen and Jenny Roberts, who live on South Pope Lick Road east of the Snyder, moved to the area eight years ago to get away from development, but now they're afraid it will catch up with them.

"What I don't want is 250 vinyl houses in my back yard," Jenny Roberts said. Her husband said they just want peace and quiet. "Now these neighborhoods could come popping in," he said.

The area has remained mostly rural because, without sewers, a minimum of five acres is needed for each house. With sewers, each acre could have about four houses.

Sanitary sewers that serve businesses off Blankenbaker Parkway, including Sam's Club and the corporate headquarters of Papa John's Pizza, are connected to the Jeffersontown sewage treatment plant. But that plant is nearly operating at capacity and can't take on another large development.

So to build the new business park, developers John Hollenbach and Greg Oakley agreed to spend an estimated \$7 million to \$8 million to install a four-mile sewer main. They would recoup their investment by letting others tap into it.

The Hollenbach-Oakley sewer main would stretch from near the Papa John's headquarters to the Floyds Fork wastewater treatment plant in Miles Park near Eastwood. The pipe would go under the Snyder and cross Pope Lick before also going under I-64.

"That would open up that whole area," said Sue Ernst, chair of the Louisville Metro Planning Commission. Andrew Pruitt, president of the Greater Louisville Association of Realtors, agreed that development would follow sewers. "That's a desirable area," he said.

The Louisville Metro Planning Commission is holding a public hearing tonight on the proposed business park and a zoning change it would need.

But the decision on building the sewer main is not before the planning commission. Developers Hollenbach and Oakley already have obtained an agreement with the Metropolitan Sewer District to build it.

MSD Director Bud Schardein, who supports the project, said sewers are needed in the area, but they won't be built unless private developers like Hollenbach and Oakley pay for them.

He said MSD would oversee installation of the sewer main to make sure it meets the agency's specifications, and it would take over the system after it's finished.

have final say on the proposal.

METRO COUNCIL MEETS TONIGHT

The Louisville Metro Council meets at 6 tonight in the City Hall council chambers at Sixth and Jefferson streets.

AGENDA ITEMS

- An ordinance appropriating \$6,800 from neighborhood-development funds to pay for equipment for the Street Heat Band, which is made up of police officers and performs at schools and community functions. The band has an anti-drug, anti-violence message.
- An ordinance appropriating \$6,700 in neighborhood-development funds to the Mary P. Myers Middle School PTSA to fund youth programming in the Bon Air area.
- An ordinance appropriating \$9,000 from neighborhood-development funds to the University of Louisville's Saturday Academy, which deals with African and African-American topics.
- An ordinance appropriating \$18,600 from neighborhood-development funds to pay for the Louisville Metro Police Department's participation in a ceremony honoring fallen police officers in Washington, D.C.
- An ordinance amending the Cornerstone 2020 plan to include the Wolf Pen Neighborhood Plan.
- An ordinance enacting the city's midyear budget adjustment, appropriating \$3.2 million. Part of the money will be used to pay for additional animal-control officers.
- An ordinance appropriating \$2.7 million from the city's reserve fund to pay for several projects, including \$2.2 million to acquire land for new regional libraries.

PUBLIC INPUT

Speakers must register with the council clerk by 4 p.m. the day before a meeting. To register, call 574-3902.

Up to 10 people may speak for three minutes each on nearly any subject at the beginning of each meeting.

ON THE WEB

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Teena Halbig, co-chair of the Floyds Fork Environmental Association, criticized MSD, saying it didn't conduct hearings on the agreement or otherwise seek public input. "It was a private agreement between MSD and the developers," she said. "The public was left out."

Schardein said the sewer main was discussed during at least two meetings the developers held with people who own property near the proposed business park, and he thinks that was sufficient public involvement.

The area that could be developed with the proposed sewer main extends east almost to Floyds Fork, the creek that would flow through three of four large parks that metro government officials and others plan to establish in coming years as part of the City of Parks plan.

However, development of the area would not necessarily threaten the parks, said former Lt. Gov. Steve Henry, who helped found Future Fund, which has bought land that will be used for the parks.

Special regulations protect the creek, Henry said. He also said well-planned residential development along park borders can be an asset.

Hollenbach and Oakley have been involved in several large commercial parks, such as Eastpoint Business Center, Blankenbaker Crossing and Blankenbaker Station.

They bought nearly all the property for their latest proposal in 2004 from Lois Holloway and her three children. If the zoning change needed for the business park were turned down, the developers could still proceed with the sewer main. But Hollenbach said he's not sure what they would do. "We would have to retrench and rethink," he said.

Reporter Bill Pike can be reached at (502) 582-4243.

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