

Press Clippings 3/25/2022

Daily Herald

Pulte's 266-home subdivision makes it past West Chicago plan commission --- 3/24/2022

By Katlyn Smith



Pulte Homes is seeking permission from the city of West Chicago to build 266 single-family houses on an undeveloped property currently owned by the family that runs St. Andrews Golf & Country Club. *Brian Hill | Staff Photographer*

The West Chicago plan commission has endorsed a modified proposal for a new housing subdivision near the St. Andrews golf course, but neighbors are still balking at the size of the development.

Pulte Homes is asking the city for permission to build 266 houses on the south side of Smith Road between Route 59 and Klein Road.

The city's plan commission unanimously supported the project after the homebuilder revised plans to reduce the number of zoning code variations originally requested. Its recommendation now goes before a development committee on April 11 and ultimately to the city council for a final vote.

Pulte has been on a building spree in the Western suburbs, snapping up some of the last large undeveloped properties in Naperville and Wheaton for new homes. Construction is underway on Trillium Farm, a Pulte development on the site of a former garden nursery near West Chicago, with homes already selling for an average price of over \$500,000.

On the city's north side, Pulte is looking to create a development of single-family houses, to be called The Preserve at West Branch, on vacant farmland. The nearly 112-acre site is owned by Jemsek-Hinckley family members, who also operate the St. Andrew's Golf and Country Club to the south.

But many residents in the area say the planned subdivision would clash with the rural character of surrounding neighborhoods and could cause environmental harm to the Klein Fen -- a rare wetland -- in the West Branch Forest Preserve.

"What may be good for Pulte's pocketbook is not necessarily good for this special, unique area of West Chicago, the fen, the traffic, the wildlife and the existing adjacent homeowners," Nancy and Robert DeNapoli said in a written message to the plan commission.

They chose to move to the area 27 years ago for the open feel and the opportunity for wildlife sightings.

"In this area's history, there were more families in the unincorporated area west of Fair Oaks (Road) that had horses and would ride the trails in the West Branch forest preserve," the DeNapolis wrote.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has indicated the state-endangered yellow-headed blackbird is a protected resource within the vicinity of the property, but it has determined "adverse effects from the proposed development are unlikely," according to a city memo.

Neighbors also fear the subdivision would cause traffic problems.

"Smith Road is busy enough. Cars cut through here to miss the stoplights on Route 59 and Army Trail," Dave and Connie Ahmann told the plan commission. "The speed limit is 30 miles per hour, and our streets are not patrolled to keep these cars from speeding as it is."

Barbara Laimins, chair of the plan commission, acknowledged the concerns about traffic and density.

"But I do believe that both staff has protected the interests of West Chicago, and Pulte surely doesn't want to create a disastrous situation that would harm their reputation," she said.

The development would have an entrance off Smith Road and another off Klein Road. By having two access drives, traffic would be "distributed in a more efficient manner and minimize the overall impact" on any road, said Javier Millan, a principal with KLOA Inc., the project's traffic consultant.

Pulte eliminated three lots from the original plan. The builder also dropped requests for setback and lot coverage deviations, satisfying concerns raised by city planners.

Homes around the perimeter of the site would sit on at least 12,000-square-foot lots, as required under a 2008 annexation agreement with the city. Most of the lots would average 8,507 square feet in size. Developers are finding that buyers prefer a slightly smaller lot to maintain, said Matt Brolley, who runs entitlements for Pulte in Illinois.

The development also sits within **Elgin Area Unit District 46**. The superintendent has submitted a written letter of support for the project, Brolley said.

Pulte plans to set aside about 5 acres for a park, which would be maintained by the West Chicago Park District, in the center of the development.

Chicago Tribune/The Courier-News

Gail Borden Public Library offering variety of programs to fill spring break time next week --- 3/24/2022

By Mike Danahey



Behind the Scenes at the Shedd is a virtual program being offered March 31 by the Gail Borden Public Library via Zoom. (Shedd Aquarium)

From story times to Marvel movie marathons, the Gail Borden Public Library District is offering a variety of programs for students during **School District U-46's** upcoming spring break, which starts Monday, March 28.

STORIES:

- Storytimes for children ages 3 to 6 will be offered from 2 to 2:30 p.m. Monday, March 28, and 11 to 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 30, at the South Elgin Branch, 127 S. McLean Blvd., and from 11 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Monday, March 28, at the Rakow Branch, 2751 W. Bowes Road, Elgin.
- Things That Go Storytimes for children ages 2 to 6, with focusing on all sorts of vehicles, will be held at 6:15 p.m. Monday, March 28, and 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 29, at the Main Library, 270 N. Grove Ave., Elgin.
- Magic Storytimes for children ages 2 to 6 will be presented at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, and 10:30 a.m. Thursday, March 31, at the Main Library.
- Unicorn Storytimes for children ages 2 to 6 are scheduled for 10 a.m. Monday, March 28, and 10 a.m. Wednesday, March 30, at the Main Library.
- Friendship Storytimes for children ages 2 to 6 will be held at 9:15 a.m. Wednesday, March 30, and 9:30 a.m. Thursday, March 31, at the Main Library.
- Storytime with Trucker the Therapy Dog for children in grades K through 8 is set for 1 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, at the Main Library.

FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS:

- Coding Club: Mario's Secret Adventure, 1 to 2 p.m. Monday, March 28, online via Zoom. Elementary school students grades 2 and up are invited to design their own video game.
- Arts and Crafts Makerspace sessions for students in grades 1 to 5, 11 a.m. to noon at the Rakow Branch and 2 to 3 p.m. at the South Elgin Branch, both on Monday, March 28.
- Crazy for Crafts, 2 to 3 p.m., Tuesday, March 29 online. Materials are available now through Sunday, March 27, at the Main Library.
- Whimsical Tree Painting, 11 to 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 30, in the Hoffer Room at the South Elgin Branch.
- Baking for Kids: April Fool's Treat, 11 to 11:45 a.m. Friday, April 1, on Facebook Live.

FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS:

- DIY Papercraft Animals, 2 to 3 p.m., Wednesday, March 30, online.

FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:

- Screenings of various Marvel Universe Infinity Saga movies, 2 to 4 p.m. daily March 28-April 1 in Studio 270 at the Main Library.
- An audiolab on how to record in Logic Pro X will be presented from 4 to 5 p.m., Tuesday, March 29, at the Main Library.
- Spring cleaning with the 270 Volunteer Corps, 5 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, at the Main Library. Volunteers will help the library with cleaning, book displays and other projects.
- Blackout Poetry, 3 to 4 p.m. Friday, April 1, at the Main Library. Attendees will make their own poems using existing books, newspapers and magazines.
- Behind the Scenes at the Shedd: A virtual visit for families to the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, is scheduled for 10 to 11 a.m. Thursday, March 31, via Zoom.

- Rock painting classes for students in grades K to 8, 1 to 1:30 p.m., 2 to 2:30 p.m. and 3 to 3:30 p.m. Thursday, March 31, at the Main Library.
- A virtual egg hunt for students in grades K to 8 will be held from 10 to 10:30 a.m. Friday, April 1 online.

Most Gail Borden programs require registration. To register or to be put on a waitlist for an activity, go to the library branch holding the event, call 847-608-4673, or go to **www.gailborden.info/uncategorized/2596-spring-break-2021** or **attend.gailborden.info/events**.