

Common sense growth: It shouldn't be an oxymoron in Oldham

By The Oldham Era editorial board
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We're relieved this week to say the Oldham County Planning and Zoning Commission once again denied a subdivision proposal that won't go away.

The developers for Brentwood — once boasting more than 400 homes, but this time only 345 — brought their plan before the commission for the fourth time last week. And we have to give Oldham Farms Development credit. They've followed the guidelines that would seem to make their development plan and requested zoning change a sure-thing. They've pledged more than \$300,000 for road improvements. They've donated land to the school district to compensate for any overcrowding the subdivision would generate. They've basically bent over backwards.

And they don't appear to be giving up.

Seeing this development appear over and over again on the planning commission's docket and in Oldham Circuit Court is exhausting, however, for those of us who believe even when you follow all the rules, there has to be a common-sense approach to growth and development.

Call it managed growth. Call it smart growth. Whatever you call it, "it" does not include approving a subdivision wedged between two of Crestwood's largest existing subdivisions, possibly increasing traffic some 300 percent on roads that are already crowded — bumper-to-bumper in some areas during rush hour.

Commissioners had to spend a significant amount of time last week finding the right, legal way to reject this subdivision proposal. Oldham Farms had done its homework. Developers tried to comply with every capacity ordinance created by the planning commission in order to ensure Brentwood's rite of passage.

Traffic concerns ultimately won the battle this time, however. Planners denied the proposal because developers did not demonstrate the roads in question could handle increased traffic, even with more than \$300,000 in improvements.

So Oldham Farms was sent away, yet again. But we don't think it should be this difficult to reject a subdivision proposal that clearly is not the best thing for the community. Though we recognize capacity standards are necessary to control development and offer a relatively organized, legal process for approving or rejecting it, there has to be an element of common sense applied — because this time, Brentwood almost gained approval.

We hope planners continue to look for those measures. Otherwise, the idea of common sense growth just becomes another oxymoron to laugh about in our county.

The views expressed in this editorial are endorsed by the five members of The Oldham Era's editorial board.