



MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

DATE: May 20, 2014
CONSENT
ITEM #9
ORDINANCE 08-110

AGENDA ITEM: City Code Amendment – Net Density Definition

SUBMITTED BY: Kyle Klatt, Community Development Director

THROUGH: Dean Zuleger, City Administrator

REVIEWED BY: Planning Commission
Nick M. Johnson, City Planner

SUGGESTED ORDER OF BUSINESS (if removed from the Consent Agenda):

- Introduction of ItemCommunity Development Director
- Report/Presentation.....Community Development Director
- Questions from Council to Staff..... Mayor Facilitates
- Call for Motion Mayor & City Council
- Discussion..... Mayor & City Council
- Action on Motion..... Mayor Facilitates

POLICY RECCOMENDER: The Planning Commission is recommending that the City Council adopt a definition for “Net Density”, and that this definition be added to the City Code.

FISCAL IMPACT: None

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED: The City Council is being asked to approve an amendment to Section 11.01 of the City Code to add a definition for net density. This action has been requested by the Planning Commission to help clarify how the City will be calculating the density of new developments, and to help ensure that future residential projects are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff and the Planning Commission are recommending that the City Council approve Ordinance 08-110 adopting a definition for net density as part of the Consent Agenda. If removed from the Consent Agenda, Ordinance 08-110 can be approved through the following motion:

“Move to approve Ordinance 08-110 adding a definition for net density to the City Code.”

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY/BCKGROUND INFORMATION: The Planning Commission reviewed the Met Council definition of net density at its April 28th meeting. The Met Council definition states that net density is calculated by taking gross residential acres and subtracting net developable acres. The net developable acres is calculated by subtracting water bodies (including wetlands and lakes, not storm water ponds), parks and open space (only if they are owned by the City and are for public use) arterial right of way (most times it is already excluded), and other areas such as any land reserved for future development or not developable according to City ordinances (like steep slopes or conservation). The Met Council has indicated that this definition is typically used by developing communities such as Lake Elmo. The Planning Commission also asked staff to research how other surrounding communities define net density, and a survey of other definitions is attached to this report.

The Planning Commission noted that as the City continues to review new subdivisions, it is important to make a clear distinction between gross and net density. The Comprehensive Plan does reference net density, and this is the calculation that should be used to determine compliance with the plan.

The definition that was recommended for approval is as follows:

Net Density. The number of housing units divided by the amount of net developable land. Net developable land does not include water bodies (including wetlands and lakes, but not stormwater ponds), parks and open space (only if owned by the City and available for public use), arterial right of way, and other land reserved for future development or not developable according to city ordinances (i.e. steep slopes or conservation areas)

The Commission adopted a motion unanimously to recommend adding this definition to the City Code at its May 12, 2014 meeting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (SWOT):

Strengths: The proposed ordinance amendment will remove any uncertainty regarding the City’s approach to determining the density of future developments.

Weaknesses: None

Opportunities: By adopting a definition for net density, Staff will be better able to communicate the City’s requirements for new developments to developers.

Threats: None

RECOMMENDATION: Based on the aforementioned, Staff and the Planning Commission are recommending that the City Council approve Ordinance 08-110 to add a definition for Net Density to the City Code as part of the Consent Agenda. If removed from the Consent Agenda, Ordinance 08-110 can be approved through the following motion:

“Move to approve Ordinance 08-110 adding a definition for net density to the City Code.”

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Ordinance 08-110
2. Survey of “Net Density” Definitions