



**City of Lake Elmo  
Planning Commission Meeting  
Minutes of July 29, 2013**

Vice Chairman Reeves called to order the meeting of the Lake Elmo Planning Commission at 7:00 p.m.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Reeves, Dorschner, Dodson, Kreimer, Morreale;

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Larson, Haggard and Williams; and

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Planner Johnson, Planning Director Klatt.

**Approve Agenda:**

The Planning Commission accepted the agenda as presented.

**Approve Minutes:** *July 22, 2013*

M/S/P: Kreimer/Dodson, move to accept the minutes of July 22, 2013 as amended;

**Vote: 3-0. Motion Carried,** with Reeves and Dorschner not voting.

Kreimer noted two corrections to the minutes, one regarding who is responsible to replace boulevard trees that die before lots are sold, and the other change pertaining to the ratio of the amount of parkland per resident recommended in the park plan. Both were amendments were accepted.

**Business Item:** *Preliminary Plat – Lennar Homes*

Klatt began his presentation by presenting a general outline of how the meeting is to proceed. He explained that the Mayor has requested to address the Planning Commission. In addition, per the request by the Planning Commission, the Chairman of the Park Commission, Shane Weis, will present the recommendation of the body, as well as answer any questions by the Planning Commission. Finally, Klatt noted that there will be a small amount of time allocated for public comment, as the Public Hearing has already been closed.

Klatt moved forward to present the important highlights of the Staff Report. Regarding density, he noted that the proposed project is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Klatt stated that the Comprehensive Plan utilizes an accepted practice of planning for growth using density ranges. This method is used due to the great variation from parcel to parcel due to roads, wetlands, slopes, soils and other reasons that make hitting an exact density figure on every parcel difficult. Klatt also presented an overview about

how the Comprehensive Plan was developed in terms of land uses and buffering as compared to the previous Comprehensive Plan.

Moving forward, Klatt discussed the aspect of the Staff Report that pertains to parkland dedication. He noted that when staff makes a recommendation regarding parks, they rely heavily on the input of the Park Commission, Parks staff and the City Administrator. The feedback that Staff received is that it is not critical to install more parkland than is currently being presented in the proposed development. It was stressed that it is important that the City have the ability to maintain whatever parks are dedicated and that they work for the needs of the development. He also presented a map that highlighted all of the park facilities in the Western portion of the I-94 Corridor. Included in these facilities are two existing City parks (Ridge and Stonegate), the Lake Elmo Regional Park Reserve, existing trails and proposed trails. He noted how these facilities relate to the City's overall park plan.

Klatt wrapped up his presentation by highlighting other questions from the previous Planning Commission meeting. He discussed the parking issue that was previously raised, describing the amount of property in between the structure and the front property line. He also described how the City arrived at the 28' wide road standard, noting that this standard represents a balance between the needs of emergency vehicles, maintenance, parking and traffic calming and circulation. Related to streets, he noted that the Lennar proposal meets all of the City standards. Klatt also spoke about the 5<sup>th</sup> Street realignment request from the property owner to the West. He noted that Staff is not recommending that any special conditions be imposed on the Lennar application pertaining to the realignment of the road. Alternatively, Staff is recommending that the property owners continue working on a realignment, and the City will allow the realignment to happen without the applicant needing to come back through the platting process.

To wrap up the Staff presentation, Klatt highlighted the revised list of conditions. He also listed draft findings for the Planning Commission to utilize for a potential motion.

Kreimer asked about Condition #19, noting that access was discussed to the north as well. Klatt noted that Kreimer is correct, and the condition should allow for access to the north.

Morreale asked what the City requirements were pertaining to parkland. Klatt noted that the Subdivision Ordinance requires a 10% land dedication or fee in lieu of land dedication. He noted that fees are used to acquire additional parkland and install park facilities. Morreale asked what the pure land dedication for the Lennar proposal would be. Klatt noted that the land dedication without fees would be 11.8 acres. Morreale noted that Stonegate Park is not large enough to accommodate all the new residents that will eventually live in this area.

Reeves asked if the 6.4 proposed acres of park include the other open space areas included in the proposed plat. Klatt noted that the other areas are not counted towards parkland. These areas also serve as storm water retention. As a follow up, Dodson asked which outlots are owned by the City vs. the HOA. Klatt highlighted a list within the plat that notes all of the ownership of the various outlots. Reeves asked if the HOA would own the outlots shown in the townhome area. Klatt confirmed that the areas around the townhomes are HOA owned.

Dorschner asked if trails are included as parkland dedication. Klatt confirmed that linear parks will only be accepted if the developer builds the trails.

Reeves asked if the City is creating a challenge of meeting the MOU with the Metropolitan Council if the City continues to accept development that is under the minimum thresholds. Klatt noted that the City has to continue to monitor the numbers guided by the MOU against platted lots. In addition, he noted that there are sometimes unique circumstances on sites that aren't always factored in such as buffers, parks, storm water ponds, etc.

Mike Pearson, 2805 Lisbon Ave. N., Mayor of Lake Elmo, spoke about the history of the I-94 Corridor planning effort. He noted that the plan balanced protection of the existing neighborhoods, orderly growth of the community, reasonable use to develop the land, and meeting the requirements of the Met Council. He commended the Planning Commission's efforts in the long range planning process, as well as the review of the plat. He indicated that the planning for growth in the I-94 Corridor has been a long and extensive process, and it is important to keep moving the process forward.

Shane Weis, 8483 27<sup>th</sup> St. N., the Chairman of the Park Commission, spoke to the Planning Commission. He noted that the Park Commissions view on new development would be to have one central open area, which Lennar does. This plan would be acceptable to the Park Commission.

Dorschner asked the Chairman if there are any studies done to indicate the current level of park use. Weis noted that Lake Elmo's parkland to citizen ratio is very high, which also means that maintenance is very high. The Park Commission needs to strike a balance between maintenance and quality of life with parkland. Dorschner noted that the maintenance of these parks must be considered. The City must ensure that we have the ability to maintain the parks well. This plan factors in both the needs of the future residents of the development and the cost of maintenance. The City needs to consider the resources required for park maintenance.

Kreimer asked if any of the park funds would be used for a broader facility for the community. Weis noted that the funds would go into the general parkland dedication fund. The specific use for those funds would be determined at a future time. Johnson

stated that the Village land use plan does call for a community recreational facility which will guide the use of some of these funds.

Morreale asked if the amount of parkland, particularly for the western portion of the neighborhood, is acceptable to the Park Commission. Weis stated that the Park Commission is comfortable with the current park as it is a central park and they factored in the maintenance. Morreale stated he feels that the proposed park is not large enough for this many people and they should be required to put in the full size. Johnson stated that the City has the flexibility to accept in lieu of funds when it seems appropriate and it has been common practice in this city in the OP developments and in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

Dodson asked how small children will access neighborhood parks. Klatt noted that the City standard requires a sidewalk on one side of the street for the very purpose of maintaining proper accessibility. In addition, he notes that the recent results from the Park Survey reveal that more residents are concerned about the maintenance of the existing parks on the system. Specifically, Klatt noted that the City has to be prepared to maintain the trail system that is constructed in addition to maintaining existing and new parks. Weis also noted that there is a central park planned for the Hammes Estates development, which was recently reviewed at the Sketch Plan level by the Planning Commission and Park Commission.

Reeves asked for more specific feedback from the Park survey. Weis stated that, at this time, they have not analyzed the data, but will be doing so at their next meeting.

Dorschner asked if the parks that were dedicated were for use by the residents that lived in the development, or if they are for use of any resident of the City. Weis stated that any dedicated Park land is a City park and can be used by anyone.

Reeves asked Weis if he felt the City parks were underutilized, properly utilized, or over utilized. Weis noted that the Park Commission currently believes that the City parks are underutilized.

Weis asked Klatt about the tot lots. Klatt explained that there might be space available in the multi-family area for a tot lot.

Joe Jablonski, Lennar Homes, noted that Lennar has built homes all over the Twin Cities and across the country. He shared his experiences pertaining to park land in the context of the neighborhoods Lennar has platted and built. He noted that small neighborhood parks have been very successful in addressing the needs of families with young children. He noted that more programmed parks with team sports require much greater amounts of parkland. Moving forward, Jablonski presented two concepts of the central park of

the Savona plat. These concepts are intended to illustrate how the proposed park space can be utilized.

Reeves opened the forum for brief public comment. He noted that there were written comments submitted by Commissioners Williams and Larson that the Commissioners reviewed.

Susan Dunn, 11018 Upper 33<sup>rd</sup> St., asked the Planning Commission to consider the City's "Commitment to the Community". She also noted that many people have worked hard to preserve land in the City. Dunn noted that this is the first time that she has seen the Savona Plat proposal, noting she felt overwhelmed by the intensity of the development. She stated that there should be additional parkland to serve the young families that will locate in the neighborhood. In addition, Dunn asked the Planning Commission to consider the EAW and surface water management plan of the development.

Charlie Devine represents the owners of the Louis Damiani Trust and Tim Montgomery parcel. Devine was complimentary of Lennar, stating that they have been good to work with in the development process. He noted that the property owners he represents, as well as the development group he is part of, wish to realign the 5<sup>th</sup> Street minor collector road further to the south. He noted that the City has taken a hands off approach thus far. He is asking that the City facilitate bringing parties to the table to bring resolution to the alignment of the minor collector road. He is asking on behalf of the property owners that the resolution of the 5<sup>th</sup> street alignment be an additional condition of plat approval. He stated that he supports the Lennar neighborhood, but needs to see realignment of the collector road.

Wayne Prowse, 697 Julep Ave N., noted that if the development is 112 acres, than the City should require the full parkland dedication. He also cited a Pioneer Press article that states that the Lake Elmo Park Reserve is overwhelmed with visitors. He stated that there is not enough parkland in the Savona plat. He also noted that the density of the plat is above the expected amount. He asked that the Planning Commission look out for the quality of life in Lake Elmo.

Reeves opened up discussion to the Planning Commission.

Morreale stated that he feels that the Savona plat will set the bar for future sewered development. He stated that if the Planning Commission allows this development to move forward, than all of the future developments will follow the precedent. Reeves asked Morreale if he thought any future developments are impacted by the parks around it. Morreale stated that he feels that parks are a key thing that should not be eliminated.

Kreimer noted that it was stated that Lake Elmo already has an overabundance of parks. However, he stated that Lake Elmo has never had high density before. For this reason,

Kreimer noted that now is not the time to pull back on parkland. He stated that there should be more parks for the amount of residents.

Dorschner noted that in an ideal world, everyone's property would back up to a park. He shared that he visited Stonegate Park last week. He noted that the park is not in great use. He notes that he would prefer to use the park system for trails that connect people to parkland and allow for alternative transportation. He stated that he respects other perspectives on parkland, but prefers additional trails.

Dodson asked Staff about the comments by Mr. Devine pertaining to the alignment of 5<sup>th</sup> Street. In addition, he asked if there is any planned improvement or bridge for crossing Keats Ave or 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Klatt noted that a grade separated trail would be problematic on Keats Ave. He noted that a grade separated trail would be ideal but costly. Related to 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Klatt explained the Staff position that the City does not want to take a position between a matter of negotiation between three active land owners. Reeves asked if it would be practical for the City to impose some type of time frame to move negotiations pertaining to the alignment of the collector road forward. Klatt noted that the 5<sup>th</sup> Street realignment will be considered if it is brought forward, but we are dealing with a lot of uncertainties.

Dorschner stated that he feels it is the City's responsibility to encourage resolution of the alignment of 5<sup>th</sup> Street. He stated that Lennar should have to work to resolve the issue so it is not a winner take all result.

Dodson stated that he is on the fence regarding the parks issue. In addition, he does not share Dorschner's feeling that imposing a condition on the alignment of 5<sup>th</sup> Street is the fair way to approach it.

Morreale stated that he is concerned about the amount of park space. He feels that the City has set the land requirement at 10%. In addition, if we accept less for this plat, it will happen for the plats moving forward.

Reeves noted that he shares the concern about allowing for enough places for families of kids to play. Nevertheless, he is sensitive to the recommendation and thoughts of the Park Commission. Johnson stated that the City needs to think in broader terms of the parks system vs. individual plans. Johnson stated the City has the statutory authority to take 10% park dedication in any combination of land and fee, depending on the circumstances and would not be setting any precedent from one plan to another.

Morreale stated that he disagrees with the interpretation of Planner Johnson in terms of a bar being set for parkland for every park coming forward.

Klatt noted that the park plan does not provide substantive guidance in how to program neighborhood parks. Also, there is not a significant push from the Parks Commission to

recommend additional parkland for this plat. He encourages the Planning Commission to dialogue with the Park Commission on future plats.

Dorschner stated that the Park Commission was represented, and it is not the place of the Planning Commission to question their recommendation.

M/S/P: Dodson/Dorschner, move to recommend approval of the Savona Preliminary Plat with the revised Condition #19, **Vote: 3-2. Motion Carried**, with Kreimer and Morreale voting no.

### **Updates and Concerns**

Council update – None

Staff update –

Planning Commission meetings upcoming on August 12 and 26.

Commission Concerns –

Dorschner asked if the future residents will be notified pertaining to potential nuisances in the area, including the mining operation and gun range within close proximity. Klatt noted that he will do some research to see how this will be addressed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:53pm

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Johnson  
Planner