



**City of Lake Elmo
Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes of December 10, 2012**

Chairman Williams called to order the meeting of the Lake Elmo Planning Commission at 7:05 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Fliflet, Obermueller, Larson, Kreimer, Reeves, Morreale, Haggard and Williams;

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Battah and Hall;

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Klatt and City Planner Johnson

Chairman Williams welcomed the newly appointed members of the Planning Commission.

Approve Agenda:

The Commission accepted the agenda as presented.

Approve Minutes:

M/S/P: Williams/Fliflet motion to accept the minutes from the November 14, 2012 meeting as amended; ***motion carried: Vote: 3-0 (Haggard, Larson, Reeves and Kreimer abstained).***

Public Hearing: *City Code Amendment – Subdivision Ordinance*

Klatt noted that the updates to the Subdivision Ordinance are intended to clarify a reference to Planned Unit Developments. The ordinance states that planned development can be pursued to allow variance to the City Code. The correct terminology is exception.

Moving forward, Klatt explained the aspect of the Subdivision Ordinance related to parkland dedication. In order to prepare the City for future growth, the Subdivision Ordinance must be updated to reflect the new sewerded zoning districts. For the sewerded zoning districts, Staff is proposing a standard of 10% of land must be set aside for parkland dedication within the residential subdivision process. In addition, the standard for future commercial areas will be set at 7%.

Other additions to the Subdivision Ordinance include the following procedural elements:

- Previous subdivisions

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- Financial dedication in lieu of land dedication

Klatt noted that one land owner did call Staff to share his concern related to the level of dedication for commercial properties.

Staff is recommending approval of the proposed Subdivision Ordinance.

Fliflet asked about parkland dedication in cases of OP and OP-ALT properties.

Klatt noted that the parkland dedication in the case of OP (7%) is above and beyond the open space requirements.

Fliflet noted the land used for parkland dedication must be available and accessed by the public, whereas open space areas in OP-developments is typically privately owned.

Haggard noted that financial dedication in lieu of land dedication one section should read “required” as opposed to “maximum”

Klatt noted that this change is correct, and the ordinance should simply read “required payment”.

Haggard also noted that the ordinance should read that rehabilitation of facilities should specify “park facilities”.

Klatt explained that this change seems appropriate.

Related to wording, Williams suggested using the term “minimum” in regard to dedications. In addition, he noted that in paragraph G, the language stipulates that the applicant notify the appropriate governmental unit. Williams asked why it would not simply read “the City”.

Klatt noted that other governmental units are notified in instances of subdivision, such as the Washington County or local school district.

Fliflet noted that the ordinance uses the terms “public” and “park” interchangeably. She recommends that this be clarified. In addition, related to the trails in OP developments, Fliflet noted that these facilities are viewed as public. She asked whether these trails were part of the parkland dedication.

Klatt noted that the construction of trails in certain developments have been counted towards the park dedication requirement, which are then public. If the construction of the trail does not encompass the entirety of the parkland dedication, then a developer can dedicate additional land or money in lieu of land for dedication.

Fliflet asked who maintains the trails in the St. Croix's Sanctuary development.

Klatt noted that the City maintains whatever trails were included as parkland dedication. This includes City parks vs. private neighborhood parks.

Fliflet noted that she feels that private neighborhood parks should be counted for parkland dedication.

Larson noted that the parkland dedication states that the land can be used for public facilities. Could there be a situation where these lands or funds could be used for some other purpose than parks and recreation?

Klatt noted that intent of the dedication is land or money to be used for community recreation. Klatt also stated that the use of the dedication can be better clarified in the ordinance.

Public Hearing opened at 7:34pm.

Klatt reiterated that he had a conversation with a land owner who felt that dedication in instances of commercial development should follow a set dedication requirement based on fair market value of the land.

Public Hearing closed at 7:35pm.

Fliflet wished to reiterate that she does not agree that private neighborhood parks are not included as parkland dedication.

M/S/P: Williams/Reeves, move to approve the Subdivision Ordinance with the previously proposed corrections, **motion carried: Vote 4-3** (Fliflet, Larson and Obermueller voted no due to their wish to count private neighborhood parks towards parkland dedication in the subdivision process).

Public Hearing: Zoning Text Amendment – PUD Ordinance

Johnson presented information concerning proposed amendments to the City's Planned Unit Development Ordinance. Johnson noted that Staff has proposed a major revision to the existing ordinance in order to bring the code up to date with recent revisions to the Zoning Ordinance and to better specify the circumstances under which the City may consider flexibility from the requirements set by the base zoning districts.

Johnson stated that the proposed amendments include a more thorough description of the objectives of a PUD, and specifically, the objectives for considering flexibility. Johnson reviewed a proposed point system for determining when flexibility could be considered by the City.

There was a general discussion concerning the potential density increases that would be allowed with the proposed bonus system. Reeves asked if the Planning Commission would have an opportunity to review the different site amenities and associated amenity points in a more detailed way. Johnson noted that the Planning Commission should have the opportunity to address specific recommendations and discussion at their next meeting.

Kreimer noted that the current code allows for a 5% increase in density and that the change to 20% represented a significant increase. Johnson noted that perceptions about the amount of density can vary from person to person. In addition, what may seem like a significant density increase in some cases may not translate to a significant increase in the amount of units of a project. Finally, with the amenity point system, the built environment is being improved in ways that the community value, which should be viewed as a tradeoff for some levels of additional density.

Williams opened the Public Hearing at 8:16 p.m.

No one spoke.

The Public Hearing was closed at 8:16 p.m.

Williams suggested postponing action on the ordinance amendment until the Planning Commission had more time to review the proposed ordinance.

Fliflet recommended that the review process include a concept plan review outside of a formal hearing process in order to provide additional time for review prior of the formulation of detailed plans.

The Commission agreed to include an additional step related to a conceptual level review that could be conducted prior to submission of more detailed plans.

The Commission discussed minor modifications and typographic revisions to the document.

Fliflet expressed concern regarding the balance between the preservation of open space verses additional density.

Williams asked for clarification regarding the intent of certain sections of the proposed ordinance and suggested revisions to unclear portions of the document.

M/S/P: Reeves/Haggard, move to table the discussion on the proposed PUD Ordinance amendments until the 12/18/12 workshop or the next regular meeting in January as time allows, ***motion carried unanimously: Vote 7-0.***

Business Item: *Dale-Frandsen Sketch Plan Review (Lennar Homes)*

Klatt began the sketch plan review by outlining the basic parameters of the proposal. In addition, Klatt explained the Planning Commission's role in this phase of the subdivision process. The sketch plan phase does not require any formal action. It is simply an opportunity for the applicant to present their proposal to the Planning Commission for the purposes of obtaining feedback.

Klatt outlined the key points of the proposal: These include the following:

- 186 single family lot
- 131 townhome residential units
- 317 total residential units
- Gross density of the proposal is 2.9 units/acre

Moving forward, Klatt outlined the overall subdivision process. The process is three stages:

1. Sketch Plan Review – introduction of the proposal
2. Preliminary Plat – detailed submission required, public hearing required
3. Final Plat – most detailed submission, developers agreement

Klatt explained how the Staff conducted its review of the Sketch Plan. Review from technical staff included Planning, Engineering, Public Works and the Fire Department.

Regarding utility infrastructure, Klatt described the location of exiting utilities in the area, as well how these utilities may be extended to the site.

Finally, Klatt outlined the next steps. They include the following:

- Review by the Planning Commission
- Discussion of parks and trails with the Park Commission
- Discussion with developer concerning public improvements
- Initiate EAW (environmental review) process
- Preliminary Plat in the Spring

Haggard asked about how this proposal relates to the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Metropolitan Council.

Klatt explained that the Land Use Plan was written to meet the minimum numbers of the MOU.

Williams asked how these figures vary with gross densities vs. net densities.

Klatt explained that gross densities is used for high level land use planning because it is difficult to calculate net densities due to the fact that it is difficult to estimate the amount of land removed due to roads and stormwater facilities. Ultimately, the net density may be higher than the gross density because there is less land in the density calculation. In the end, some sites may be near the bottom part of the density range, whereas other sites may be near the higher end. It all depends on the site conditions from project to project.

Fliflet asked how the construction of the 5th Street collector road system will be addressed. In addition, Fliflet asked about the staging of constructing the road.

Klatt explained that the purpose of having the collector road system in the City's Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that the land owners and developers are fully aware of the expected public improvements. Related to staging, Klatt explained that the City anticipates that the road will be built as development proceeds throughout the I-94 Corridor.

Williams explained how the road system was developed conceptually with the I-94 Corridor Work Group.

Haggard asked how the access spacing guidelines apply to the 5th St. collector road.

Klatt explained that access spacing guidelines is determined by the road speed and road classification as determined by the Transportation Plan. In this case, the spacing must meet 1/8th of a mile.

Joe Jablonski, Lennar Homes discussed the history of Lennar homes and general information about his company. Moving on to the proposal, Mr. Jablonski highlighted several portions of the submittal, including details of the Comprehensive Plan, existing conditions of the site, the Sketch Plan, the buffer cross sections abutting the Stonegate neighborhood, the multi-family portion of the plan, and a proposed cross section of the future 5th St. collector road system.

Mr. Jablonski continued his presentation by describing how the home types will fit into the neighborhoods, specifically detailing the 65' and 75' wide lots. He also showed several examples of home types that Lennar builds on these home types.

Obermueller noted that the homes that Lennar proposes to include are not consistent with the character that she had hoped to see.

Johnson explained the draft Design Standards Manual does not include single family homes, or the LDR Zoning District. Staff anticipates that the design standards will be ready for adoption in April 2013 in order to incorporate the work of the Theming Project, led by Damon Farber and Associates.

Haggard commented that she hopes that there are sidewalks in front of every home. In addition, she is concerned about the safety of children playing in the street with the amount of traffic generated in the townhome portion.

Jablonski highlighted where public parking facilities are located within the townhome development. These are intended to eliminate the need for on-street parking.

Reeves commented that he is supportive of the curvilinear streets included in the proposal.

Kreimer inquired about the different home styles for the 75' and 65' wide lot varieties. In addition, he asked if Lennar has a general idea of what the cost of housing would be. Jablonski noted that it is too early in the process to estimate expected costs.

Obermueller noted that she likes the design of the concept, including the lots and streets. However, she would like that home design to be more traditional and reflective of Lake Elmo.

Fliflet noted that she supports the design of the multi-family area. In addition, she commented that she thinks there are more access points to 5th St. than necessary.

Larson asked that all the trails be 10' because it is the standard of the City.

Haggard noted that she would like to see rambler concepts as part of the multi-family portion specifically for seniors. In addition, she would like to ensure that there are safe pedestrian crossings of 5th St.

Jablonski noted that Lennar encourages open areas within the townhome development that have been utilized by families for play areas. They are typically maintained by the association. Jablonski noted that Lennar will look at incorporating additional recreation space in the townhome portion.

Reeves noted that he feels that perspective regarding architecture of single family homes is subjective in nature.

Johnson noted that the City did conduct a visual preference survey in 2011. He also noted that the Staff can share the results of the survey with the development community.

Kreimer noted that the neighborhood will have a significant amount of children. He would hope that an additional tot lot or small park would be included. In addition, he made additional comments about the areas buffering the Stonegate neighborhood.

Williams noted that the proposal meets the intended goals of the Comp Plan. He also noted that he is concerned about the location of the intersection of Keats Ave. N. and 5th St. In addition, he is concerned about the dead end streets in the multi-family development for safety concerns. In addition, he recommends that the Park Commission look at all the proposed park and trail.

Jablonski noted that the purpose of presenting the concept was to receive feedback and input. He thanked the Planning Commission for the opportunity to present the concept and discuss different elements of the plan.

City Council Updates

The City Council approved the Massage Licensing Ordinance at the Council meeting on 12/4/12, as well as the text amendment to change therapeutic massage to a permitted use in the GB Zoning District.

Staff Updates

The Planning Commission will hold a workshop on Tuesday, December 18 at 6:30pm to discuss Village Comprehensive Plan Amendments.

Staff also gave an update regarding the status of terms for the members of the Planning Commission.

The City Council appointed 5 new Planning Commission Members. They include Michael Reeves, Tom Kreimer, Jay Morreale (alt.), Rolf Larson (alt.) and Abdalla Battah (alt.).

Commission Concerns - *None*

Adjournment at 10:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Johnson
City Planner