

**PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey Planning Commission conducted a Work Session on Thursday, March 14, 2013, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Gary Levine
 Commissioner Gary Van Scoy
 Commissioner Ralph Brauer (arrived at 7:15 p.m.)

Members Absent: Commissioner Randy Bauer
 Commissioner Joseph Field
 Commissioner Jessica Perez
 Commissioner Robert Schiller

Also Present: City Administrator Kurt Ulrich
 Development Services Manager Timothy Gladhill
 Assistant Planner/Environmental Coordinator Chris Anderson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Levine called the Work Session to order at 7:00 p.m., noting a quorum of the Planning Commission was not present.

Development Services Manager Gladhill shared Commissioner Perez's apologies for missing her last meeting due to an illness.

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS/COMMISSION BUSINESS

2.01: FOR DISCUSSION ONLY: Receive Presentation by Mary T., Inc. on Potential Housing Development on Outlot A, RAMSEY TOWN CENTER 13TH ADDITION

Development Services Manager Gladhill stated the City has received a request from Mary T., Inc. and PSD, LLC for a land use proposal on Outlot A, Ramsey Town Center 13th Addition, for a housing development. The site is currently owned by PSD, LLC. He indicated that Mary T., Inc. is currently based in Coon Rapids, Minnesota, and provides a variety of housing options in a number of locations. Development Services Manager Gladhill reviewed the proposal by outlining the proposed development and housing types, tax implications, and potential TIF funding sources. He stated that should this project move forward a Comprehensive Plan Amendment would be required along with site plan review for orientation of buildings. He said that staff is in favor of this project and outlined the benefits of the variety of housing types that a project such as this would create.

Chairperson Levine asked what is planned for the southeast corner of Ramsey Boulevard and Sunwood Drive.

Development Services Manager Gladhill said the City has a purchase agreement with SuperAmerica for the site and while there is no site plan yet, they have addressed the retail component as part of development. He said they have also been approached by the charter school group on some possibilities, adding there are no agreements or official requests to date.

Chairperson Levine asked about a recent inquiry for an online school.

Development Services Manager Gladhill stated the PACT Charter School was inquiring about the former Diamonds restaurant parcel for a separate school. He noted they are only in preliminary discussions.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked staff to outline the half-mile radius for the Commission.

Mary Tjsvold, Mary T., Inc., asked how many acres are on that site.

Development Services Manager Gladhill said the site is approximately 240 acres, adding the master plan boundary was 322 acres.

Commissioner Van Scoy said this area is zoned for a business park and asked if we have another area that has similar zoning on the south side of Highway 10.

Development Services Manager Gladhill said this is a unique business park and would be a corporate campus designation based off employment. He said the Commission may be referring to a future land use map south of Highway 10 and west of Armstrong Boulevard, adding that we desire to have more employment opportunities the area is not zoned appropriately yet.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if there is another similarly-zoned area.

Development Services Manager Gladhill said there is an area 1-2 miles away south of Highway 10 with similar uses but not exact.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked if we move ahead are we limiting the future use of the parcel.

Development Services Manager Gladhill said we would be taking away areas of employment but added the EDA is looking at the next stage for more employment base, such as light manufacturing and office or the single users. He said the City has areas of undeveloped land should the Commission wish to consider another area for a business park, adding if the vision of this site remains for an office park is acceptable, but noted that it may take longer for the vision to be achieved.

Matt Kuker, Mary T., Inc., noted the Class A office space market is very slow but that Class B is in demand.

Ms. Tjstvold asked where there are other open spaces with the necessary density for the proposed residential product.

Development Services Manager Gladhill indicated other potential areas but noted the Veterans Administration Clinic and Northstar Commuter Rail are the driving factors of this project.

Ms. Tjstvold shared their initial proposal of 68 villas containing one or two bedrooms that are totally accessible. She said their target user would be veterans that would be integrated into the community and with their families. She said Mary T., Inc. has been in business for 37 years, adding that they offer assisted technology to allow people to live the way they want. She outlined assisted technology examples that feature sensors for doors, air-conditioning, emergency calls for when someone falls or wanders, along with pillow sensor options. Ms. Tjstvold shared communication options with items such as medical records, which would be an added benefit for Ramsey. She stated they also have a long history working with people with brain injuries and that this project has the potential to offer other types of housing, such as apartment buildings with different levels of service, home health, therapies, and hospice. Ms. Tjstvold said they are good at taking care of people through a wide breadth of health care and that they would be a good match for Ramsey. She stated that they were looking for agreement in concept before they move forward with more detail.

Commissioner Brauer said the land parcel includes the main T-1 line for the internet, adding there is currently 30% of black fiber not being used so this parcel may be a good match for them as well. He said this line would allow Mary T. to tie into many different things.

Ms. Tjstvold said their program of SmartCare helps provide a safe environment in the home but also provides communication with the outside world.

Development Services Manager Gladhill noted the broader fiber optic project is going on as well.

Commissioner Van Scoy inquired about the different levels of need.

Ms. Tjstvold said they have 50 villa units in Coon Rapids that are rented and offer services in the home, which is similar to what they are proposing for Ramsey. She said this would be the start of a continuum of service should more services be needed over time. Ms. Tjstvold said they could contract with a commercial kitchen such as the Falls Café for food service, adding that being family-owned she predicts these villas will rent quickly and that no phases will be needed.

Chairperson Levine asked how this project compared with their Coon Rapids campus.

Ms. Tjstvold shared the elevation proposals, noting the campus has small catered service, two villas that serve four men with brain injuries their own private space, and 39 more one-level villas with services. She added that the project is 100% occupied and is financially sound.

Commissioner Brauer said he liked what they did in Coon Rapids and that he would like to see this in Ramsey as it would be visible from the highway and will attract attention to the development.

Ms. Tjstvold said the rental aspect is working well.

Chairperson Levine agreed that the Coon Rapids location is a nice project.

Commissioner Brauer inquired about landscaping plans.

Ms. Tjstvold said they are still in the preliminary stages and will answer that once they know if this site works better than another.

Chairperson Levine said this site seems to fit what you are trying to accomplish because of the rail, size, and location.

Ron Nordlin, Mary T., Inc., said the perception has been that these projects are low-income and subsidized but said this is a premier product and people are well within their financial standards, making these projects long-term with low turnover.

Ms. Tjstvold added that if veterans' vouchers are needed they will work to assist for that.

Ruth Dahl, Mary T. Inc., stated that home health care is Medicare certified for veterans.

Mr. Kuker said that is important because the VA has placed a freeze on any new contractors in the VA system.

Ms. Tjstvold stated veterans will choose to move here because of the clinic.

Commissioner Brauer asked how they overcome an objection to railroad tracks.

Mr. Nordlin said that once people realize the horns do not sound there is not a problem.

Ms. Tjstvold noted wetlands are between which helps with horns in Coon Rapids and flows into the park.

Ms. Dahl shared that when the windows are closed there is not much concern.

Commissioner Brauer referred to the continuum of care and asked if they had ever thought about becoming a service provider for the whole area such as in private-owned homes. Ms. Tjstvold said they do that already with catered programs and assisted technology.

Commissioner Brauer said Town Center could be a technology showplace for people to remain in their homes with the best technology available.

Ms. Tjstvold explained the medication box technology features and notification processes.

Mr. Nordlin said the SmartApartment features can be incorporated into a private home.

Commissioner Brauer referred to Google's national grant program technology for these types, adding this would be a great thing to have in Town Center.

Ms. Dahl said the mobile technology is available too and can be taken with when a person moves.

Commissioner Brauer said Mary T brings three things for the COR: 1) technology; 2) variety of housing options available similar to Coon Rapids that would be better than a big box user; and 3) integration into the community and continuity because Town Center was intended to have a variety of housing and people all within walking distance.

Mr. Nordlin said the one-level villas work great for this goal.

Ms. Dahl added this age group is growing quickly.

Development Services Manager Gladhill provided three handouts to Commissioners regarding land use applications, Comprehensive plan/zoning amendment, and policy change. He asked if the proposal is acceptable to the Commission and if so, is it scale, either site special or broader. He added that staff would like to see this project in Ramsey.

Commissioner Van Scoy said he liked the concept but did not see integration into the pedestrian portion and assumed that will occur.

Development Services Manager Gladhill shared a revised plan with expanded sidewalks, adding they will decide on the scope and scale of public streets through the site plan process.

Mr. Kuker noted that shuttle buses are an option as well.

Chairperson Levine asked how one would access the other side to the VA

Development Services Manager Gladhill said those details will be worked out in the master plan, adding they will have an appropriate trigger for a sidewalk on the west side.

Commissioner Brauer said his only concern is the way Town Center was envisioned which was a small downtown with minimal frontage so this will take more creativity to maintain that feel. He said it will have to be different than the Coon Rapids site as 10-feet in the front yard may not be appropriate.

Chairperson Levine said asked if they are planning on more of the north side look.

Development Services Manager Gladhill said staff will map out the process accordingly should the Commission move forward.

Commissioner Brauer said this site is perfect for a PUD.

Development Services Manager Gladhill said a transit-oriented PUD is common for this type of project.

Chairperson Levine said consensus of the Planning Commission was positive and asked if amendments will be site specific or broader area as they do not want to create small zoning for one site. He said there is common ownership between the two parcels and that they will have to work with the HRA, adding a single parcel only could open up some disagreements.

Commissioner Brauer said they could end up with a 10-story office next door so it makes sense to plan the entire area. He likened it to density transition, which will be needed to make this work well.

Chairperson Levine asked how we do that by utilizing a land use we do not anticipate. He said it is difficult to anticipate the future.

Commissioner Brauer said they could take the entire parcel and rezone it, adding we have the flexibility with density transition before anything else comes forward. He said the entire area could be unified.

Chairperson Levine asked how we do that.

Development Services Manager Gladhill said staff will offer the tools, which may just be a PUD on the site but will spend the time to review this first.

Ms. Tjstvold said it would be helpful to know what the other two parcels will contain. She said they may have some suggestions or want to develop the entire parcel as they always look at what is around their projects.

Mr. Kuker said if the 68 villas fill they could be go between the VA and Mr. Alberts' building as an another option.

Development Services Manager Gladhill said the zoning would allow for that possibility.

Ms. Tjstvold said the campus concept could get even better.

Chairperson Levine said the concept seemed good and that they would like to see this work. He asked staff to work with the applicant on site plan review.

Councilmember Backous said he liked the concept, including the technology and ala carte options. He said he toured the villas in Coon Rapids and liked the larger campus. He stated the project could reach a large community and will be a great amenity to our citizens.

Commissioner Brauer said this concept reinforces the way we have been marketing the COR, from Jim Deal to Falls Café to Coborns. He said they are all high quality local businesses and Mary T. Inc., would fit in better than a big box retailer as they are local, innovative and important.

Ms. Tjstvold said Coborns is working with General Mills on a take-out meal option.

Mr. Kuker said it is great working with quality people.

Ms. Tjstvold thanked the Commission for meeting with them.

3. COMMISSION / STAFF INPUT

None.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Levine adjourned the Work Session at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Gladhill
Development Services Manager

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Planning Division Secretary

Drafted by Cathy Sorensen
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.