

5.02: Review Sketch Plan of Harvest Estates Located at 15153 Nowthen Boulevard NW; Case of N.I.K. Management, Inc.

Presentation

Community Development Director Gladhill presented the staff report stating the purpose of this case is to review the Sketch Plan for Harvest Estates, a proposed 45-lot detached, single-family subdivision on the former municipal center campus located at 15153 Nowthen Boulevard NW. Sketch Plan Review is a process outlined in City Code that provides an opportunity for the Planning Commission to review compliance with the Comprehensive Plan as well as Zoning and Subdivision Codes before an applicant spends resources on detailed civil engineering drawings. This step is not required by Minnesota Statute Chapter 462; however, it provides for a more proactive and collaborative design approach in an effort to avoid issues at a later date. He discussed the access issues to the site and explained that staff was recommending that the Nowthen Boulevard drive access point be closed and that focus be placed on Helium and Alpine. Lot sizes and the concept plan for the proposed development was discussed. Staff reviewed a letter from the developer, along with the Sketch Plan further with the Commission and requested feedback.

Commission Business

Commissioner Brauer thanked staff for their efforts in addressing the traffic concerns for the proposed development.

Chairperson Levine requested the public come forward at this time with comments.

Al Kempf, 15220 St. Francis Boulevard NW, explained he was a 42 year resident of Ramsey. He encouraged the Commission to consider how the proposed development would impact the neighborhood to the east and the increased traffic levels that would be created on 152nd. He expressed concern with the narrow width of the frontage road.

Commissioner Bauer stated he served with Mr. Kempf on a subcommittee when the data center was being considered. He commented that the proposed access point for the data center would have been Nowthen Boulevard. It was noted that the new plan was to alter the access points, which would impact the surrounding neighborhoods, as traffic would be forced to the east. He proposed a right in/right out access onto Highway 47. He had real concern with the proposed Sketch Plan and suggested Harvest Estates have access to Nowthen Boulevard.

Commissioner VanScoy questioned if access at 149th could be closed and then opened at 152nd. He inquired if this would be a viable, less costly option for the development.

Community Development Director Gladhill discussed the proposed access points for TH 47 and commented staff could explore this option further.

Chairperson Levine did not want to see TH 47 overburdened with traffic and encouraged staff to keep this in mind while routing traffic to this new development. He feared that there would be a

choke point on TH 47 with the current design. He suggested that traffic be routed to Nowthen Boulevard.

Commissioner Bauer agreed with this recommendation and stated he would not support the Sketch Plan without access to Nowthen Boulevard.

Commissioner Nosan did not understand why staff was recommending the access point on Nowthen Boulevard be eliminated. She commented that she avoids TH 47 at all cost.

Community Development Director Gladhill explained the proposed land use differed from the current land use and had different traffic patterns and numbers. In addition, the current driveway does not line up with a public street.

Commissioner Brauer indicated he was majorly delayed in getting to the meeting due to an accident along TH 47. He further discussed how traffic on Waco Street was increasing in speed due to the fact it was a through street.

Ron Christensen, 5782 152nd Way, he recommended that the Nowthen Boulevard access be closed. He did not want traffic from the new development impacting the neighboring school. He then discussed his slow commute to work each day along TH 47 to Bunker Lake Boulevard.

Community Development Director Gladhill requested the Commission make a motion on how to handle the access point on Nowthen Boulevard.

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner Brauer, to recommend that staff work with the applicant to redesign Harvest Estates to provide a full access point onto Nowthen Boulevard.

Further discussion

Commissioner VanScoy believed that when he first looked at the sketch plan he thought access onto Nowthen Boulevard was necessary. However, after reviewing the comments from the County, he did not believe this to be true. He believed there were traffic issues on both 5 and TH 47 that needed to be addressed. He was concerned with traffic getting in and out of the new development without a signalized intersection on Nowthen Boulevard.

Commissioner Nosan was against putting more traffic onto TH 47.

Commissioner Brauer expressed concern with how the elementary school would be impacted by the proposed development. He believed that the County should reconsider the safety and access concerns to the elementary school.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Bauer, Brauer, Maul, and Nosan. Voting No: VanScoy. Absent: None.

Community Development Director Gladhill requested the Commission now discuss the buffer issues and direct staff on how to proceed.

Mr. Christensen discussed the promises that were made to him when he purchased his lot and expressed concern how the development of the lots behind his home would impact the adjacent wetland. He requested the Commission reconsider the placement of the lots. He recommended that a buffer area be considered.

Community Development Director Gladhill explained he received an email from Steve and Leah Swenson, 5734 152nd Way, stating the same concerns and requested a buffer area be placed between the new development and the existing homes. He discussed an option to redesign the development eliminating the cul-de-sac, creating a larger buffer zone and noted this would reduce the revenue for the developer but this was an alternative for the Commission to consider.

Motion by Commissioner Bauer, seconded by Commissioner Maul, to recommend that staff work with the Harvest Estates developer to redesign the plat with the portion south of the blue line and north of the orange line be retained by the City as an outlot for utility easement.

Further discussion

Commissioner VanScoy requested further information on the size of the holding pond. He asked if a small park could be located near the pond.

Community Development Director Gladhill discussed the location and size of the holding pond. He indicated the park would be landlocked, but this possibility could be further considered by staff.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Bauer, Maul, Brauer, Nosan, and VanScoy. Voting No: None. Absent: None.