

Motion carried.

Chairperson Bauer closed the public hearing closed at 8:16 p.m.

Commission Business

Motion by Commissioner Gengler, seconded by Commissioner VanScoy, to recommend that City Council adopt Ordinance #21-02 amending City Code Section 117-148 (Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area).

Further discussion

Councilmember Musgrove asked if these changes could result in more project opportunities, such as riverbank stabilization and whether there would be additional funding opportunities for river property owners. Deputy City Administrator Gladhill stated that changing the zoning ordinance may not directly result in that action but having compliant regulations will assist. He advised of work that was done through the EPB that reviewed the condition of the shoreline and could result in additional funding opportunities for residents.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Gengler	aye
Commissioner Peters	aye
Commissioner Anderson	aye
Commissioner VanScoy	aye
Chairperson Bauer	aye

Motion carried.

6.04: Public Hearing: Consider Recommendations Related to Riverstone South; Case of Capstone Homes/Riverstone Development

- 1. Adopt Resolution #21-015 Approving Comprehensive Plan Amendment from Low Density Residential to Medium Density Residential for Detached Townhome Section and Preliminary Plat for Riverstone South**
- 2. Adopt Ordinance #21-03 Approving Zoning Amendment from R-1 Residential (MUSA – 80) District to R-1 Residential (MUSA – 65) District, R-1 Residential MUSA – 50) District and R-2 Residential (Detached Townhome) District**

Public Hearing

Chairperson Bauer called the public hearing to order at 8:20 p.m.

Presentation

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill presented the staff report stating staff recommends approval of the project with the contingencies noted in the staff report.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that in general he likes the plan but is concerned with the safety of the residents on Bowers Drive. He recognized that those residents do not like the concept of an additional access but stated that he believes that is critical for safety and without that he cannot support this request.

Deputy City Administrator commented that originally staff proposed that connection, but it did not move forward. He stated that he would not want to tie that to this project as the developer is not responsible for that.

Chairperson Bauer commented that this development has nothing to do with a second access for Bowers Drive, as that will continue to be an issue regardless of this proposal.

Commissioner Anderson asked if this development would have an HOA and private streets. He commented that the street width seems narrow.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that he would let the developer speak to whether there would be an HOA. He stated that in terms of road widths there is a menu of options that can be selected with different levels of parking allowed. He stated that a 32-foot width road would allow parking on both sides of the street, whereas parking would only be allowed on one side of the street for the road width proposed. He stated that the main street that goes through this development would be a little wider, whereas the spur roads would be 29 feet in width with no parking on one side of the street.

Commissioner Anderson commented that he has been plowing snow for the City this season and the narrower roads can be tough, therefore he would support wider streets where possible.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she would also prefer a wider road. She asked if there would be sidewalks, and whether that would be on one side or both sides. She also asked if there would be fencing between the homes and solar garden.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill replied that sidewalks would be along one side of the road, as required by the City. He stated that the smaller lot homes will be adjacent to the solar garden and noted that he would allow the developer to provide details on the buffering between those homes and solar garden.

Citizen Input

Tom Bakritges, Capstone Homes, acknowledged the landowners noting that the Pearson family has trusted them with developing a project to preserve their legacy. He also expressed appreciation to City staff, the Commissions and City Council for the communication and cooperation throughout the past year of planning. He stated that the overall site is about 78 acres and it was

important for them to figure out the right transition of density transitioning throughout the site. He noted that the larger lots are proposed on the south side, adjacent the existing homes and preserved trees, transitioning to smaller lots as you move towards the solar garden. He stated that there would be a landscaping buffer along the length of Riverdale Drive. He stated that as you enter into the site onto Pearson Drive, people would pass the preserved area of trees and park area. He commented that there will be seven acres of tree preservation that will be dedicated to the City along with another eight acres of open space and ponding. He stated that they have created a 15-acre area to act as a buffer between this development and adjacent development. He stated that they developed this plan after receiving input from City staff, the City Council and advisory groups, and residents. He stated that the townhomes will have a lawn maintenance HOA while the single-family homes would be under a master that includes the buffer area along Riverdale Drive. He stated that the street widths proposed match the road width in Riverstone North and has worked very well. He stated that they are required to provide sidewalks on one side of the road and have those proposed on the plans. He stated that there is vegetation on the other side of the existing fence around the solar garden site. He noted that with the existing vegetation they would not propose additional screening for that area.

Steve Bona, Capstone Homes, stated that throughout the site they would have homes similar to Riverstone North but noted that they would have more of the larger homes in this development. He commented that there will be a great variety of homes throughout the development. He provided details on the townhome product offerings that they would propose for this development in order to match the desires of home buyers. He stated that there is a large variety of front elevations and home plans included in the preliminary plat for the detached townhome product, noting that they have been selling extremely well in their other developments. He commented that the 29-foot width for streets has worked well in Riverstone North, noting that this would be similar with amenities provided in return for the 29-foot-wide streets. He commented that Unicorn is proposed for a street name. He recognized that the City has a street naming policy but asked that a different name be selected for that roadway in order to assist in marketing.

Commissioner Peters stated that he lives in the Brookfield development, in a Capstone home, and asked if the front porches would be wood or concrete.

Mr. Bona replied that they do wood front porches because they continue building in the winter and therefore concrete cannot be poured in the winter months.

Commissioner Peters asked if the wood would be treated or left raw.

Mr. Bona was unsure but noted that he could follow up on that.

Commissioner Peters stated that in his neighborhood some of the homeowners were not aware of how to treat a porch and used paint, which does not hold up well. He suggested that the porches be stained/treated to ensure they look the same.

Mr. Bona commented that he would be happy to pass those comments on and can recommend that to their production team. He stated that it is a significant process to make a change to every home but would be happy to share the comment and get feedback.

Commissioner Anderson referenced the northeast corner, specifically lots 16 through 20, noting that those lots appear to be less than 40 feet in width and asked for details.

Mr. Bakritges stated that those lots are not less than 40 feet, as they are measured at the setback and not the right-of-way.

Chairperson Bauer commented that he lives in Riverstone North and has not had a problem with the 29-foot width.

Mr. Bona commented that the narrower road provides a benefit to calming traffic, as traffic travels at higher speeds on wider roads.

John **Dionne**, 14806 Bowers Drive, stated that he was previously a member of the Ramsey City Council before transitioning to being a District Court Judge. He commented that virtually no one along Bowers Drive likes the density higher than it needs to be. He recognized the concept that if someone does not want something to be built next to them, they should purchase the land themselves. He commented that with the required amendments, it is an ability for the City to follow the plan that was set forth before them. He asked why the number of houses is being packed in above what is allowed by the Comprehensive Plan and zoning. He used the example of 29-foot roads, which developers like because they are less costly and allow more lots, but they are not good for cities and maintenance. He believed that higher density housing should continue to be concentrated around The COR rather than increasing the density in this area. He stated that often sidewalks are setback into yards with tree planting between the road and sidewalk while other times sidewalks are against the road and asked which option this plan would propose. He stated that this is an opportunity for the Commission to require the developer to follow the guidance of the Comprehensive Plan and not increase the density in this more rural area. He appreciated the architectural considerations included in this plan to ensure that all the homes would not look the same. He commented that developers will come and go but residents often remain in the community for longer terms. He asked the Commission to deny the amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and require the developer to rework its plan to meet the guidance of the Comprehensive Plan.

Dave Nathe, 14453 Llama Street, stated that he owns the adjoining property. He asked what would happen with Lazy Dayz RV, as that business parks on both sides of the street. He asked if there would be a buffer zone or fence buffering his property. He asked if the ponding area on the site would be increased or whether another ponding area would be added.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that he will work with Lazy Dayz to evaluate the parking as he believed the intent was to only allow parking on one side of the street. He commented that as the connection for this development is made that parking issue will become more important. He stated that the Nathe property is undeveloped and abuts 65-foot lots. He

stated that he could follow up with Mr. Nathe to speak in further detail. He stated that this development will need to treat its own stormwater and its plans will be reviewed by the City and Lower Rum River Water Management Organization and confirmed that new ponds will be created on the site.

Mr. **Dionne** commented that anyone coming out of Bowers Drive would need to travel one mile down onto Armstrong to get onto Highway 10 to head west to Elk River, which would dramatically change the access to the highway for those residents.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that is not a Capstone improvement but a highway planning process for the City and encouraged residents to continue to provide input as they continue to walk through the design for Riverdale Drive.

Eric Nathe, 14453 Llama Street, asked for clarification on the lift station on the east. He stated that the plot shows Pearson Drive almost coming into their property and commented that he would love to see a buffer zone between this development and his property. He stated that people from Bowers Drive often come onto their property and believed that additional residents in this area would only increase this problem.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that the lift station is the sanitary sewer connection for wastewater and provided details on that system. He stated that the connection is shown in order to provide a connection in the case the property to the east is developed. He stated that pavement could be put in or a sign could be placed stating of a possible connection in the future, noting that it is important for residents to know of a possible road connection to prevent issues in the future.

John Jacobson, 14691 Bowers Drive, stated that he is concerned with vehicles entering Highway 10 to go towards Anoka from Bowers Drive, noting a slight turn to the northwest which makes it difficult to see if cars are coming from the Elk River direction. He asked if there would be a way to add an acceleration lane to allow Bowers Drive traffic to reach the traveling speed.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill provided details on the Riverdale Drive project which would be setup before new motorists are added to the area. He noted that the City would develop plans and specifications which would be reviewed and approved by MnDOT. He agreed that an at grade acceleration lane could be considered, as there is right-of-way available. He stated that the constraining factor will be the distance between Bowers Drive and Armstrong on Highway 10. He stated that staff will discuss that option as the Riverdale Drive process moves forward and hoped that process would begin later this year.

Gretchen Morris, 14820 Bowers Drive, commented that she believes the issue of density was previously discussed. She stated that while she is not a fan of ten feet between townhouses, she recognizes that there is a return on investment that is necessary to make a project feasible. She asked the number of homes that would be needed to make the development work.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that there were multiple open houses for the project, which incorporated a lot of input from residents on Bowers Drive. He stated that changes were made to the design to increase the lots sizes for the properties nearest Bowers Drive along with the additional buffer in order to provide a compromise. He stated that this is the model that the Planning Commission and City Council agreed to move forward in terms of neighborhood design and variety of housing products.

Mr. Bona stated that they have been working on this process for one year with six or more meetings with neighbors on the design along with concept design meetings with the Planning Commission and City Council. He stated that the tree preservation land and buffer area was provided as a compromise, removing 21 lots, in order to address the input received from the Bowers Drive residents. He stated that the five-foot side yard setback is the typical setback for detached townhome products. He noted that he would be willing to meet with the Nathe family to discuss buffering concerns. He noted that they do not have buffering proposed in that area because of existing vegetation and the tree preservation and landscaping that would be provided on the overall plan.

Motion by Commissioner VanScoy, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to close the public hearing.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Gengler	aye
Commissioner Anderson	aye
Commissioner VanScoy	aye
Commissioner Peters	aye
Chairperson Bauer	aye

Motion carried.

Chairperson Bauer closed the public hearing closed at 9:31 p.m.

Commission Business

Commissioner VanScoy stated that he expressed his concern with the disregard for public safety and feeling very strongly about that. He stated that staff made the comment that the issue is not related to this case and asked for clarification.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill stated that the Commission could take action on this proposal, and if desired could provide a second motion asking the City Council to reconsider a second access for Bowers Drive.

Chairperson Bauer commented that a second access for Bowers Drive is a separate issue from this specific development. He noted that although that connection was part of one of the original sketch plans, it was removed as a result of the input from the Bowers Drive residents and not the position of Capstone.

Motion by Commissioner Gengler, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to recommend that City Council adopt Ordinance #21-03 and Resolution #21-015 approving actions related to the Riverstone South Preliminary Plat.

Further discussion

Commissioner Anderson asked for a friendly amendment to the motion to request the Council to review the second access to Bowers Drive as he is also opposed to not having a second access for that neighborhood. Chairperson Bauer asked for input from the Council discussion on that topic. Councilmember Musgrove commented that the consensus was divided, but overall, the Council respected the concerns from the Bowers Drive residents related to safety concerns that would arise from adding additional traffic onto the narrow Bowers Drive. Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that there was a strong consensus from the Council to not have that connection. He noted that there were even concerns from the Bowers Drive neighborhood with a pedestrian connection because of the narrow road and lack of sidewalk. He stated that while one or two members of the Council may have still favored the connection, the strong majority opposed that. Chairperson Bauer stated that the issue of a second access to Bowers Drive is separate of this request and stated that this action should first be considered and then a separate action could be taken related to a secondary access for Bowers Drive.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Gengler	aye
Commissioner Peters	aye
Commissioner Anderson	nay
Commissioner VanScoy	aye
Chairperson Bauer	aye

Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner VanScoy, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to recommend that City Council reconsider the connection to Bowers Drive, at some form, for public safety reasons.

Further discussion

Commissioner Peters stated that he thought he recalled different ways to manage an emergency pathway for vehicles and asked what happened with that. Deputy City Administrator Gladhill stated that option was discussed internally but there was not enough support to move anything forward that would allow pedestrians or vehicles.

A roll call vote was performed:

Commissioner Anderson	aye
Commissioner VanScoy	aye

Commissioner Gengler nay
Commissioner Peters nay
Chairperson Bauer aye

Motion carried.

Chairperson Bauer asked that Councilmember Musgrove share the input from the Commission when the issue is considered by the Council.

7. COMMISSION BUSINESS

7.01: Center Street Framework and Policy Plan

Presentation

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood presented the Staff Report and highlighted the Center Street Area Framework and Policy Plan and welcomed any comments or feedback the Commission may have on draft plans or its elements.

Commission Business

Commissioner Gengler commented that this is a great plan and appreciated the thought and details that went into the plan. She stated that the pumphouse treatment stands out as being something that will add so much value to the center of the city. She also appreciated the thoughtful amenities and stormwater treatments. She asked where public art might come into this as it could be an additional amenity that could attract more visitors.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood provided an example of public art/display. He stated that he appreciated the notion of more traditional public art and identified concrete placeholders that could be foundational elements for public sculpture that could become wayfinding areas and provide a sense of community. He stated that he is excited about public art in this location as well as throughout the park system. He recognized that there would need to be additional discussion on possible funding for public art elements in the parks.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he also likes the plan. He stated that if he were asked to prioritize, he would suggest beginning with the pumphouse and then Municipal Plaza as that was promised to Affinity. He stated that the remaining items could fall in line after those two items.

Chairperson Bauer commented that some of the projects within The COR are on hold right now with the challenges of the past year and stated that perhaps this would be the right time to begin on these elements which would continue to attract people to this area. He stated that housing in this area continues to fill up as soon as it is built and that increase in population will continue to attract the interest of retailers when the economy opens up more and restrictions are lifted.