

8.01: Review Sketch Plan for Williams Woods; Case of Bill Boyum (Project 20-138)

Presentation

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl presented the Staff Report stating that staff recommends the Commission direct the applicant to move forward into developing formal Preliminary Plat application.

Commission Business

Chairperson Bauer stated that a comment was received related to a 60-foot corridor around the lake and asked if that is included in the plan.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that the plan has not incorporated that at this time. She stated that the 40-acre piece that the lake is on is completely wetland and not buildable.

Chairperson Bauer commented that he would like those comments to be a part of the record along with the comments from Police Chief Katers related to the cul-de-sac and second access.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that without the City getting involved and taking property from other property owners through a court process, a second access would not be available.

Commissioner VanScoy referenced the December 3rd project documents and noted that there was a comment from the Fire Department which states they prefer the second layout but believe a second connection to the other neighborhood would need to be made. The comment stated that without a second access there would be too many homes in the area with only one access.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl clarified that the December proposals included both 19 lots and nine lots.

Commissioner Gengler commented that there have been comments related to future divisions and potentials for lot splits. She asked if this were to move forward as nine lots, would there be potential for additional lot splits in the future.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that staff also discussed that potential. She stated that if there were a future request to split property following the creation of nine lots, it would have to meet the subdivision requirements. She commented that while future development cannot be restricted, it would be difficult to add more lots with the layout as proposed. She stated that the applicant is proposing to market the two northern lots as executive lots and there is planned tree preservation, but the applicant could speak to that more.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that there would be two 20 acre lots and if someone wanted to subdivide in the future and eliminate the cul-de-sac, extending that to the north, he would not believe there to be an issue with lot width.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that it would sound that the cul-de-sac would need to be extended in order to support that. She stated that properties would also require road frontage and could not be landlocked. She commented that situation would require a variance. She confirmed that type of request would need to go through a similar process to this.

Joe Bailey, representing the applicant, commented that they have discussed the possibility of connecting through to the neighboring development but that would require going through City park and connection to the east there is a wetland. He stated that they are working to minimize the impacts to the wetlands in this area. He stated that the larger two properties to the north could be further divided in the future but as noted by staff that would require additional variance.

Chairperson Bauer commented that there is concern from public safety related to the length of the cul-de-sac and asked if there are any other options to address that.

Mr. Bailey commented that they are limited on access to the site without disrupting adjacent properties. He stated that the Fire Department was concerned with the width and therefore they have agreed to increase the width of the roadway. He stated that the access from 175th is currently very narrow and therefore there are not options to add a secondary access.

Todd Olin, representing the applicant, commented that they have looked at a number of variations for the site and this proposal balances the road width, number of lots, wetland impacts and preservation of natural features. He stated that they received input from the neighbor to the west requesting that the corridor to the west be protected. He stated that it would be very difficult to get across wetlands to provide another access to the west or east. He stated that they have attempted to plan a development that would be sensitive to the environment and they reduced the number of lots to decrease the density and number of vehicles on the road. He stated that they also widened the road to accommodate the comments of the Fire Chief. He stated that the length of the cul-de-sac is related to the shape of the property, preservation of trees and attempt to avoid wetlands. He stated that any increase in the number of lots or road length would require a variance, noting that would cover the concern that the lots would be further subdivided. He stated that they are doing their best to limit the number of lots on the property and minimize impacts on the wetlands and natural features.

Chairperson Bauer asked for information on what lies to the northeast. He asked if there is undeveloped land in that area that could be acquired to extend the road.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that land is already privately owned and functioning as residential property.

Chip Davids, 7730 178th Lane, stated that he has lived in his neighborhood since 1973 and it is a quiet secluded place in Ramsey. He stated that the neighbors like the privacy and adding an access through the park into that neighborhood would increase traffic by 200 percent, as it would create a shortcut from CR 64 to CR 5 that people would use as a cut through. He would highly recommend avoiding an access through the park as it is a beautiful area that is home to wildlife and would be a detriment to the existing neighborhood.

Doug Hiltz, 7711 178th Lane NW, commented that the neighbors enjoy the privacy of the secluded neighborhood which is quiet and peaceful and home to wildlife. He stated that losing the park would be a detriment to the neighborhood and the wildlife that use that area. He did not want to see a connection through the park.

Chairperson Bauer referenced the larger lots proposed on the northern end and possible future subdivision of those lots. He commented that if there is not a second connection the only way to do that would be to request a variance for a longer cul-de-sac, therefore it would seem further subdivision could be limited by not issuing an additional variance.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl noted that additional language could be added to the Preliminary and/or Final Plat stating that additional subdivision requests would need to come before the City Council.

Chairperson Bauer noted that formal action from the Commission is not required tonight but any concerns and comments should be raised before the applicant invests additional funds into this process.

Commissioner Walker commended the developer for limiting the number of lots and keeping the rural feel of Ramsey in this area. He stated that he would prefer to leave the park and not provide the second connection. He stated that he likes that the developer chose larger lots at a lesser number in order to fit with this area of Ramsey.

Commissioner Anderson commented that once again this would create the dilemma of issuing a variance for things outside of the City Code. He stated that this is the same issue as Bowers Drive. He noted that longer cul-de-sacs create a safety concern as noted by Public Works and Public Safety. He asked the liability the City would have if there were an emergency and access cannot be gained. He stated that perhaps it would be time to review the maximum cul-de-sac length and determine if an adjustment should be made to City Code. He stated that he would love to see this development go through but could not support something that would put the City or the residents at risk. He stated that he would like input from Public Safety and Public Works on the appropriate length of a cul-de-sac.

Commissioner Gengler commented that she supports the proposal. She realizes that it may not be ideal but given the unique circumstances of the property and adjustments that have been made to the road width, she can support the application.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that he appreciates the comments from the residents on 178th and likes that the developer is proposing fewer lots. He stated that he does have concern with the lack of a second access, as that is critical for long term development, noting that this would landlock 40 acres. He commented that making the property nice for a few individuals is not the best for the City. He stated that this is the first time that he has seen a sketch plan where the Council has developed a resolution to influence the mission.

Commissioner Dunaway commented that in reviewing the site plan and sketch plan he was unable to see another potential access for the site. He stated that he was unsure the Commission could

require an applicant to purchase another property. He echoed the comments of Commissioner Walker that there are a lesser number of smaller lots, as that mitigates the impact on Public Safety.

Commissioner Walker asked if it would make a difference if the developer widens the road even a bit further. He commented that there are several fire hydrants on Variolite that could be utilized by a pumper truck. He asked if a 40-foot-wide road would satisfy the concerns with the cul-de-sac length. He stated that he supports the application as presented but is trying to find a compromise for those that struggle.

Commissioner Anderson commented that he likes that idea. He stated that he would even support wider than that road, or perhaps a divided roadway.

Commissioner Peters commented that he would support a larger cul-de-sac at the end which would allow for trucks to turnaround. He commented that a divided road would require residents to only travel in one direction from their driveway in order to get around the development.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl stated that the Fire Department recommended a 32-foot roadway. She was unsure of the plowing concerns that would come with a 40-foot road.

Chairperson Bauer commented that this is a unique situation in which the property is landlocked by existing development. He recognized that there have been compromises already reducing this proposal to nine lots. He encouraged the applicant to continue to work with City staff and Public Safety to address as many concerns as possible with a single access. He stated that perhaps additional sketches come back before the applicant expends the funds on Preliminary Plat.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill recognized that there are constraints on the site and therefore this would be a candidate for a variance. He referenced the comment related to the Council resolution and noted that is not an uncommon situation. He stated that the Commission has reviewed a sketch plan for this parcel previously and there was a split decision, therefore further direction was requested and provided by the City Council. He noted that similar direction from the Council has been provided for other developments, using the recent example of Riverstone South.

Mr. Olin stated that this proposal would have a similar number of lots to a 600-foot cul-de-sac. He noted again that they have reduced the number of lots in their proposal in order to address Public Safety concerns, minimize wetland impacts and preserve trees.

Chairperson Bauer commented that he does not particularly like variances for long cul-de-sacs but feels that the applicant has done the best they can to meet the concerns and there does not seem to be a realistic alternative. He encouraged the applicant to continue to work with Public Safety to address those concerns as this moves forward.