

6.04: Public Hearing: Consider Sketch Plan and Comprehensive Plan Amendment for the Property West and South of Fire Station #1 (Project No. 21-122); Case of U.S. Home Corporation dba Lennar

Public Hearing

Chairperson Bauer called the public hearing to order at 8:35 p.m.

Presentation

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report stating that staff is generally supportive of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment. However, significant revisions to the Sketch Plan seem necessary. Most notably, there is a need to modify the layout to incorporate at least one additional point of access and reducing any proposed cul-de-sac to no more than 600 feet. He stated that a neighboring property owner has indicated having interest in speaking with the applicant and staff provided that connection to facilitate discussions. He noted that could open the opportunity for another access that would eliminate the need for such a long cul-de-sac.

Chairperson Bauer stated that even without that connection perhaps there could be a loop back to avoid the cul-de-sac. He recognized that would require a redesign.

City Planner Anderson stated that if there is not a need for all the greenspace south of the fire station parking lot, the City could look at that option.

Chairperson Bauer noted that there are definitely some options but the proposed layout with the cul-de-sac would be a waste of time.

Commissioner Anderson noted that the properties to the north and west appear to be at least one acre in size.

City Planner Anderson stated that those lots are within the rural developing zoning district but likely existed prior to the 2.5-acre requirement. He confirmed that they are acreage lots on private well and septic.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl confirmed that the lots to the north are about one acre in size and the lots to the west are about 2.5 acres in size.

Chairperson Bauer noted that there is industrial property to the south and east.

Citizen Input

Joe Jablonski, Lennar, appreciated the opportunity to come before the Commission tonight and obtain feedback. He noted that they have worked a little with staff and wanted to get input and start discussions with the change in the zoning districts. He stated that their question is whether it would be appropriate to change the use to a lower density with townhomes rather than an apartment or higher density use. He stated that if the Commission is not comfortable with that aspect, the

remainder of the discussion would be unnecessary. He stated that they did resubmit a plan around July 16th that shows a looped road connection. He noted that the looped road maintained the same number of lots and single-family area to maintain the transition. He stated that one of the challenges related to access is that unless you go to the west to get on Armstrong, the roads on the other side of Armstrong do not match up. He stated that there would be opportunity to link some of the private driveways to the fire station area or main road in order to provide additional emergency access.

Chairperson Bauer noted that the 2040 Comprehensive Plan was recently completed and showed this property as high density. He stated that it seems logical to change the property to medium density.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that he agrees that it would make more sense and provide a better transition.

Chairperson Bauer confirmed the consensus of the Commission to support the change in density.

Commissioner Anderson commented that buffering would be mandatory along the north and west because of the size of the adjacent existing lots.

Mr. Jablonski asked for clarification on the required buffering.

City Planner Anderson stated that staff has not initiated review of the updated drawing with the looped road. He stated that there are multiple options that could be applied for density transitioning, but landscaping is usually the chosen option and provided additional details.

Chairperson Bauer asked for input on the lot width.

Commissioner Walker stated that he would reserve his opinion until he hears input from the residents that live adjacent to the subject property.

Commissioner Anderson stated that the Commission has received input on this type of transition in the past. He noted that in the other instance the residents were acceptable to the 65-foot lot width adjacent to the existing lots with the appropriate density transition which included a berm corridor and landscaping.

Chairperson Bauer stated that in that case there were sketches provided with an open house worksession where neighbors could come in to review the plans and provide comments. He stated that through those discussions there was a compromise reached between the developer and neighbors. He suggested that the developer follow a similar path in order to gain input and support from the neighboring property owners.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he is still against even the looped plan. He stated that the City has problems with developers presenting a nice plat that only has one way in. He stated that although the fire department would have access, he would be concerned with how residents could get out of the development if there is an incident. He noted that he would be more in favor of the

plan if there is a second access. He stated that he does not mind the mix of density as long as transitioning is provided but is against the long cul-de-sac.

Mr. Jablonski stated that this property is challenging because of its shape. He stated that they have communicated with the neighbor but first attempted to work with just the subject property and are not aware of what may or may not come from discussions with other property owners. He noted that they also want to be cautious about forcing additional traffic through a rural area. He stated that there are no roads that align on the other side of Armstrong because of the fire station and therefore it would be a challenge to provide an in and out access without acquiring more property.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that ideally it would be nice if the City could work with the applicant on this as the ideal situation would be to have access through the City property. He asked if there has been conversation about that concept.

City Planner Anderson stated that staff will be meeting to determine whether that would be viable. He believed that the existing septic drain field may be in that location, but perhaps the City could connect to municipal services which would eliminate the need for a drain field.

Commissioner VanScoy stated that he fully supports that concept. He stated that if the City could support this development, it would be a nice solution.

Chairperson Bauer stated that based upon input received in previous discussions, people are generally opposed to bringing additional traffic through existing residential neighborhoods.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that the Public Works Committee recently reviewed a request to repave the fire station parking lot and confirmed that the drain field is located in that area being discussed.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that there was a public workshop on a similar case with attached townhome products in 2018 and the feedback was shared with Lennar prior to developing their design. She highlighted the comment themes received in 2018.

Commissioner Dunaway asked the challenges to having a second access on Armstrong.

Senior Planner McGuire Brigl commented that Anoka County has to permit additional access points and would likely only permit one access for the property.

Commissioner Dunaway commented that a lot of time and energy was spent discussing a nine-lot subdivision with a long cul-de-sac and the property had one access. He stated that he would not be comfortable with this many homes in a development with only one access, as there would be over 100 homes in this development.

City Planner Anderson replied that formal response has not yet been received from Anoka County. He stated that staff would attempt to work with the County to say that a viable second point of access is needed because of the concerns of staff and the Commission. He recognized that it would be difficult to match the roads on the other side of Armstrong.

Commissioner Walker referenced the looped road concept and stated that he understands the concern with a long cul-de-sac and one entrance into the development. He asked if there would be a way to come down next to outlot B and make it longer to have two lanes going in and out from Armstrong.

Commissioner Anderson stated that perhaps a service road goes in front of the fire station that connects to the development street to provide that additional connection for safety.

Chairperson Bauer provided a scenario in which a truck is coming south on Armstrong and someone coming out of the development hits the truck and that blocks the roadway to the development.

Commissioner Anderson stated that perhaps there is a possibility to connect to 151st. He recognized that would connect a higher density area with an existing lower density area and that those existing residents probably would not like that. He stated that there are other possibilities that could be considered.

Mr. Jablonski thanked the Commission for its input.

Kyle Swenson, 15049 Iguana, stated that he attended the public meetings in 2018. He stated he realizes that if he wanted control over the property, he would need to purchase it. He appreciated the input of the Commission related to density transitioning. He stated that he has appreciated the wooded area and private feel of his property. He stated that his family and the area have enjoyed the property in its current state and the wildlife that uses the area. He stated that he appreciates this plan much more than the proposal from 2018. He stated that he likes the idea of a berm for transitioning. He noted that his property is 2.5 acres, and they ride four wheelers and use their yard and do not want to cause issues with the residents that will move into the new homes. He stated that he is always concerned with a brand-new development making the existing homes that were constructed in 1987. He believed that the berm would help to provide a separation between the new and older homes. He stated that he would prefer to have single family homes on the exterior of the development. He again stressed that he would like to see a transition berm as that would help to buffer noise and sight between the developments. He stated that perhaps there can be a maintenance agreement to ensure the ponds are continually maintained as well.

Motion by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Dunaway, to close the public hearing.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Bauer, Commissioners Anderson, Dunaway, Peters, VanScoy, and Walker. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Gengler.

Chairperson Bauer closed the public hearing closed at 9:16 p.m.

Commission Business

Chairperson Bauer noted that there has been input to the developer on their proposal. He noted that the first action that would be necessary would be related to the Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Motion by Commissioner VanScoy, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to recommend that City Council approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment and forward the request to the Metropolitan Council for consideration.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Bauer, Commissioners VanScoy, Peters, Anderson, Dunaway, and Walker. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Gengler.

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