

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL #6 MEETING
June 11, 2014 Gibson Room, Civic Center

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Robin Baker, Carl Donovan, Darrell Beauchamp, and Cherry Loney

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Julie Parker

There were approximately 25 neighborhood residents of Castle Pines Addition in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Old Business:

Minutes of the May 7, 2014 meeting were approved as written.

Committee Reports: None

Robin reported on the successful ice cream social held by the Council to celebrate the new playground equipment at Verde Park. At least 100 people were in attendance.

New Business:

Castle Pines Addition: Residents spoke of their concerns about a proposed zoning change that, if approved, will change current zoning to allow for multiunit apartment complexes. Currently plans are underway to construct a 50-unit, 3-story apartment complex on the west end of Castle Pines. Several property owners voiced concerns about placing this type of structure in their neighborhood, which was originally intended for single family dwellings and condos. Spencer Woith, Woith Engineering, has been engaged by Robert Stone, builder, as the project engineer. He was in attendance and addressed questions from property owners. Spencer said the type of apartments will be market driven (high end vs lower monthly rent, garages, etc.) He noted everything would need to go through the public hearing process beginning with the request for a zoning change at the Planning Board meeting on June 24 at 3 pm. The following property owners voiced various concerns.

Josh Racki, 2544 Castle Pines Way

Martin Edwards, 1500 25th Ave. So.

Dale Yatsko, 674 Stockett Rd speaking for his son Orin Yatsko, 2500 Castle Pines Way

Donna McPartlin, 2524 Castle Pines Way

Dave Delaney, 1415 25th Ave. So.

Kevin May, 2536 Castle Pines Way

Jessica Vlasie, 2512 Castle Pines Way

Daniel Arnold, 1505 25th Ave. So.

Jerry Dennis, 1512 25th Ave. So.

Nick and Lynn Porter, 2504 15th St. So. via email

Darlene Dennis, 1512 25th Ave. So.

Jason Olthoff, 2513 Castle Pines Way

Lonnie McAllister, 2516 Castle Pines Way

Concerns brought forward include:

1. **Zoning and Property Use as Represented When Property Was Developed:** The property is zoned for single family dwellings and condos, not multi-unit apartment buildings. There was no mention of multi-unit apartment buildings at the time of purchase. Some property owners indicated they would not have purchased property if they had known multi-unit apartments could eventually be constructed in the neighborhood.
2. **Increased Traffic:** The 50 units would each have 1.5 parking spaces. At a minimum, this means 75 more cars in the area making an estimated 3 – 4 trips daily to work, shop, etc. raising the traffic level considerably. There is already a lot of traffic in the area and traffic issues (speeding, no stop signs, missing the turn and running up on the grass). Increased traffic will only exacerbate this problem.

3. Safety: Many families who live there are young families with small children who play in the area and also walk to Sunnyside School. Increased traffic will present added safety issues. Also, there are road improvements planned for 13th St. and 24th Ave. So., which will result in more traffic moving faster than it currently does. This too will add to safety issues, particularly for children.
4. Parking Issues: It was noted that 1.5 parking spaces per unit does not provide enough parking space and apartment tenants would probably have at least two vehicles and possibly a recreational vehicle. This will lead to parking along the street as has happened in other Great Falls neighborhoods. Pictures of apartment complexes near the soccer fields were provided as a case in point.
5. Increased Crime: The apartments will likely be lower rent units as the economy in Great Falls does not support a market for higher end units. This may attract a segment of the population that is not compatible with a family neighborhood and could mean crime rates in the neighborhood would increase.
6. Decreased Property Values: Many raised concerns about the effect it would have on their property values noting Castle Pines is a subdivision of homes. “Why are we driving property values down? If this type of apartment complex is needed, it should be placed in an area more suited for this type of living. The area planned for the apartment complex would better serve the neighborhood if it was converted to a park.”
7. Fundamentally Changes the Neighborhood: People bought property from Robert Stone with the understanding it would be for condos and single family dwellings, not multi-unit apartments. This changes the neighborhood and is an issue of fundamental fairness.
8. Privacy: The privacy and seclusion of backyards will be jeopardized by a multi-story apartment structure, which will enable tenants of upper stories to see into neighbors’ yards.

By unanimous ballot, the **Council voted against a zoning change** and to formally request that the Planning Board and Great Falls City Commission deny the request. Robin Baker will attend the June 24 meeting and present the Council’s request.

Neighborhood residents were encouraged to attend meetings and to fully participate in the public process.

The Council asked Cherry Loney to contact Jerry McKinley about conducting traffic studies at 15th St. So./25th Ave. So. and Castle Pines Way/25th Ave. So. to determine if and where traffic control and signage is needed.

Other Business:

Donna McPartlin, 2524 Castle Pines Way noted there were problems with snow removal on Castle Pines Way. The Council suggested she contact Jim Turnbow directly to describe her concerns and give him the info needed to follow up.

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cherry Loney, Secretary