

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
GREAT FALLS PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD/ZONING COMMISSION
September 22, 2015**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Great Falls Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission was called to order by Chair Nate Weisenburger at 3:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of the Civic Center.

ROLL CALL & ATTENDANCE

Planning Board Members present:

Nate Weisenburger, Chair
Scot Davis, Vice Chair
Peter Fontana
Anthony Houtz
Cheryl Patton
Mark Striepe

Planning Board Members absent:

Keith Nelson
Sophia Sparklin

Planning Staff Members present:

Craig Raymond, Director P&CD
Galen Steffens, Planner II
Phyllis Tryon, Sr. Administrative Assistant
Connie Rosas, Sr. Administrative Assistant

Other Staff present:

Dave Dobbs, City Engineer
Sara Sexe, City Attorney

Mr. Raymond affirmed a quorum of the Board was present.

MINUTES

Action Minutes of the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission. Please refer to the audio/video recording of this meeting for additional detail.

Chair Weisenburger asked if there were any comments or corrections to the minutes of the regular meeting held on September 8, 2015. Seeing none, the minutes were approved as submitted.

BOARD ACTIONS REQUIRING PUBLIC HEARING

Cottage Grove Phase 3 – PUD Amendment 50th Street North off of 7th Avenue North

Galen Steffens, Planner II, presented the staff report for Cottage Grove Addition Phase 3 PUD Amendment. The applicant, Discovery Meadows, Inc., is requesting a PUD (Planned Unit Development) amendment for 2-unit townhome structures to be permitted. The property was zoned PUD in 2008, and Phase 3 aligns with Phase 1 and Phase 2 in layout, density, and design. Phase 1 and 2 are fully built out with detached single-family residential units, while Phase 3 is only partially built out, with a number of lots sold and ready to be developed. The development consists of 28 lots.

Townhouses are permitted in the PUD district, and the proposed amended development standards for the subject property are primarily consistent with the original PUD standards. The proposed PUD amendment does not create an increase in density; the current density as it sits now is 5.39 dwelling units per acre, which is less than Phase 2 at 5.88 dwelling units per acre. There are no proposed changes to property lines, and the existing subdivision provides adequate area to meet all of the proposed amended PUD development standards for setbacks, height, and lot coverage.

There will be a few site specific differences between the proposed PUD amendments and the previous PUD standards. Some of the units will be attached, thus eliminating some of the side yards. The owner shall be required to fulfill the proposed development standards, parking, lighting and landscaping requirements when the project goes to the Design Review Board and they then apply for building permits.

Ms. Steffens stated there are 8 criteria for the basis of decision, which are reviewed in the Staff Report. The location of the development serves as an asset to the broader community, as it is in close proximity to work, shopping, and additional recreation opportunities. Amending the PUD to allow detached 2-unit townhomes will encourage infill development on the vacant lots in the subdivision. The proposed project meets all the criteria provided by the City Code, and is consistent with the City Growth Policy.

Information was provided to Neighborhood Council #4 via email on Sept. 3, 2015. As the subdivision was approved in 2008, the Council members had general questions regarding the history of the subdivision, which was provided via email. Ms. Steffens said that based on the information provided, staff recommends the approval of the proposed PUD amendment.

PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Chair Weisenburger opened the floor for the public question and answer session. Mr. Fontana asked for clarification on whether there was one unit per lot attached at the lot line, or if the proposed changed would allow for multiple units on one lot. Ms. Steffens confirmed that it will remain one unit per lot, connected at the lot line, which allows for increased lot coverage and a larger structure.

Mike Walsh, 709 50th St., asked if there was a price range for the proposed townhomes, his concern being that they will be low-income housing units. Ms. Steffens said the City does not

regulate affordability or pricing, but there is an aesthetic standard that must be met when it goes to the Design Review Board.

There was also discussion on what streets will be paved with the continuing development in that area.

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

Spencer Woith, Woith Engineering and developer for Cottage Grove, clarified why they are requesting the PUD amendment to allow for the addition of attached 2-unit townhomes. Mr. Woith explained that by developing these lots with townhomes, there is an opportunity to get an additional 6 feet out of the floor plans, thus providing more flexibility to add width. Also, due to the foundation issues they have experienced since the project began in 2008, they have switched to deep foundation systems. The common foundation wall that a townhome provides allows them to increase foundation stability, as well keep the housing costs reasonable. Moving to deep foundation systems has severely driven the costs of construction up, but the intent is to keep the price points in the same range as the rest of the development.

Not every lot will be developed with a townhouse; there will be a mix of detached single-family residential units. The aesthetics of any proposed townhouse will need to be approved by the Design Review Board, which Mr. Woith pointed out is a public meeting, and the public is welcome to review and comment on those designs.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Linda Peacock, 704 50th Street North, asked if the garage would be done with a foundation system, or if it would be poured slab on slab. Mr. Raymond said typically the garage slabs are still slab on grade foundation. Ms. Peacock said her garage has lifted six inches in 3 years, and she would hate to see people move into these new developments and have the same problem.

Guy Steuer, 704 50th Street North, said the geotechnical report for his home states there is the potential for six inches of heave, and he asked why it is not being addressed with the current development, as it is a possible problem. Mr. Raymond responded that since 2008, the City's policy does not currently allow for houses to be built when the geotechnical report states there is the potential for six inches of movement. Per the policy, the maximum movement for differential settlement is one inch. Mr. Steuer stated he attended this meeting to make sure whoever is in charge notifies the people buying these homes of the possible problems.

PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Mr. Striepe thanked the developer for moving to deep foundation systems and diversifying the development to address the concerns with the foundation.

MOTION: Recommendation I: That the Planning Advisory Board recommends City Commission approve the proposed PUD Planned Unit Development amendment for Cottage Grove Addition Phase 3, legally described in the staff report, to allow for attached 2-unit townhomes in addition to detached single-family residential units, subject to the Conditions of Approval being fulfilled by the applicant.

Made by: Mr. Davis
Second: Mr. Striepe

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion passed.

COMMUNICATIONS

Next Meeting Agenda – Tuesday, October 13, 2015

- None

Project Status:

- Faith Lutheran Church – Annexation, Zoning, CUP – City Commission First Reading
Oct. 6, 2015

Petitions & Applications Received:

- Phoenix Townhomes – Minor Subdivision and CUP 2-unit Townhouse
- Grace Home – CUP Community Residential Facility, Type II
- New Castle Addition – PUD Amendment, Major Subdivision, 2-unit Townhomes,
Vacation of ROW

New Board member Applications:

- Recommendation to City Commission

Prior to the meeting, ballots were passed out to the Board members for recommending a new Board member to the Planning Advisory Board. Mr. Raymond shared that the results of the ballot voting was for Michael Wedekind. He said that information would be forwarded to City Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Guy Steuer, 704 50th Street North, said that there were 12 people in the neighborhood who signed a petition and feel they should have something to say about the neighborhood that is developing around them, but now it seems a done deal. Ms. Steffens responded that the next step is to take the recommendation of the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission to the City Commission, who will then vote to approve or deny the PUD Amendment. The City Commission meeting is a public hearing process where any of their concerns can be submitted in writing, or voiced at the meeting. She also noted that if City Commission were to deny the PUD Amendment, the developer can still develop with the originally approved detached single-family homes. Mr. Steuer said they would prefer to keep it how it was originally approved, and they don't understand why it is being changed now. If this amendment is allowed, their concern is what will be allowed to develop in the future. Ms. Steffens responded that the application is still only for single-family units, not multi-family; this will just allow for the houses to be attached on one side.

Ms. Patton wanted to clarify that the approval and planning for this subdivision was completed in 2008, and this is simply a minor change allowing two units to be connected. She said when the subdivision to the east of their neighborhood develops (it has not yet been platted), they will have full opportunity to give input on that development.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Weisenburger adjourned the meeting at 3:42 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY