

CITY OF MEDINA
PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 13, 2012

1. **Call to Order:** Commissioner Charles Nolan called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Present: Planning Commissioners Robin Reid, Kathleen Martin, V. Reid, Charles Nolan, John Anderson and Randy Foote

Absent: Kent Williams

Also Present: City Councilmember Elizabeth Weir and City Planner Dusty Finke.

2. **Public Comments on items not on the agenda**

No public comments.

3. **Public Hearing – Mattamy Homes requests a Preliminary Plat and Rezoning for a 65 lot residential subdivision to be located north of Highway 55 and east of Arrowhead Drive (PID 02-118-23-34-0002).**

Finke presented application. He explained the property is currently agricultural and is approximately 10 acres in size. Single entrance point is Meander Road. Stormwater ponds located on the NW side of the site along with the center of the homes within the development are being proposed.

Applicant proposes to construct Meander Road. Staff has some concerns with the main road into the subdivision. The applicant will be required to construct left turn lanes on Meander and a study is required to determine final design. The sewer line will come across State Hwy 55 and staff suggests the sewer line be held down as far as possible. The water would come from the Fields of Medina East project. The applicant will need to submit specifications for irrigation. Public Works and City Engineer finds the Park site as a location for a water tower.

The stormwater ponds don't have good access and staff recommends better access and to make sure it is able to handle sump pump water. There is a floodplain elevation that will need to be determined. Staff is not concerned, but needs the elevation to be determined, and will also need a map amendment.

The tree replacement plan of 4700 inches of trees is required. This volume of trees wouldn't be possible to replace on the overall site. The applicant requests a tree waiver to the tree replacement requirements in lieu of the park plan proposed. He said the park would allow for planting of trees and playground equipment.

V. Reid asked about the access point on the east and if it would be the only access point or would additional access eventually come from Tamarack. Finke said the City's Transportation Plan and Concept Plan have shown a connection. He said if Tamarack is going to fall on the eastern lot line then we'd want at least 500 feet of separation and V. Reid said that was a good point. V. Reid said she sees two benefits such as causing the traffic to flow to the west and then with an eventual access point to the south would take some traffic off of 116.

V. Reid asked why another water tower would be required when there is one along Pinto and Tower Road. Finke explained the tower didn't hold water, but rather a leasing structure for telecommunications. Finke said the proposed site functions well for a water tower since the elevation is high and it wouldn't require as much pressure. V. Reid said she was not real supportive of the proposed water tower location.

V. Reid asked about hockey rinks on ponds. She asked if the City could ever do hockey on ponds. Finke stated that it doesn't work very well. He said a lot of the same issues with the stormwater ponds make the rinks hard to maintain.

Foote asked if the applicant was proposing the minimum number of lots to meet density. Finke said yes. Foote then said does that mean if they remove one lot they wouldn't meet density. Finke said yes.

R. Reid asked if the City received pictures of what the homes would look like. Finke said the style would be similar to the first phase.

Anderson asked what the City knew about the property to the south. Finke said the property to the south is zoned commercial with approximately 30 acres in size. He said south of the Fields of Medina East is mixed use and their proposal showed multifamily in that area, with additional medium density directly to the north.

Martin inquired about the trees in the northwest corner. She stated that it does not appear efforts have been made to save the trees. She stated that a different housing style would better meet density and save trees. Finke said the area is technically not wetland and the area does have a lot of large Oaks and is transitioning to Maple and Basswood understory due to the shade tolerance. He went on to say it is ranged as moderate quality with about two acres in size. Martin said she is troubled by the removal of the wooded area. She further asked what had been done to preserve the trees. Finke said a different housing style. Martin said that a different housing style would be more in line with the intent of the zoning.

Martin stated that the plans seemed a bit skinny and a lot of blanks need to be filled at the preliminary plat stage. She said she was hesitant to recommend approval without some of the blanks filled. She also agrees with V. Reid concerning the traffic issue for access.

Nolan said the property was originally guided mixed use and then the land owners came to the City to change the zoning. He said it would have been nice to see some of the minutes around that time. He said having been on the committee during the Comprehensive Plan process, it was his vision that there would be more of a transition between zoning along State Hwy 55 than what the proposed plan would provide. The mixed use was supposed to be a transition from Highway 55 back to single-family. The plan smacks of Plymouth and it is a boring plan.

Anderson said he recalls the discussion and said that the Commission wanted a transition. Finke said the property was originally 40 acres and then it was divided into two properties. The property owners had statutory authority to divide the property without platting. The property was guided mixed use. After they divided the 40 acre parcel, the property owners requested one of the two parcels be re-guided to medium density rather than mixed use. Finke said the property immediately to the north was guided medium residential.

Foote inquired if this was the bare minimum number of units that could be developed on this site. Finke stated that it was.

R. Reid stated that the Mixed Use concept would allow for saving the trees, while also meeting the density. She said she agrees with Nolan concerning the plan being boring. Anderson said if two-family residential was constructed it would help with the density issue and then would help resolve the issue of the trees, which then could be preserved. Nolan said that a thorough tree inventory was not provided.

Nolan asked if the applicant had looked at the opportunity of expanding the existing pond to the east, rather than creating a new one on this site, which would then preserve the trees. Finke said the trees would have to be removed for the ponding, and utilizing the pond to the east wouldn't be possible. Foote said he doesn't see how the plan could work without removing all the trees and that isn't something they care to do.

Tom Wolter (Mattamy Homes) stated that they were looking to plan for a 2nd phase of the project to double the size of the first phase and to mirror it. He said they would install Meander Road next summer. They would be offering the same product line as the first phase. He said they did look at the townhome product line, but it was not cost effective.

Anderson asked to have the economics of townhome development explained. Dave Nash (EVS) stated that the City's fees make it impossible to construct a feasible townhome project. The primary problem is that the City bases its fee on a per-unit basis which ends up being approximately \$14,000 per unit. V. Reid asked if that was similar to other cities fees. Nash said that our fees are more expensive than in other communities and our rates are similar to single family homes which make it more difficult.

Anderson inquired how much of a lower fee would make a difference.

Nolan inquired if the applicant had looked at ways to make the street more interesting. Nash stated that he had worked on numerous site layouts, but when the density is the driving force, there is really nothing that can be done differently.

Nolan asked if the developer would construct twin homes along one side of the development. If you took out ten of the units and constructed twins, the impact fees wouldn't be significantly higher. He said over such a large development he has a hard time understanding how the approximate \$75,000 would have an impact on development. He said if the numbers are that tight, what are they going to do if the market gets soft?

Nash said part of the issue is the market for twin homes and the fees. He said the product is unknown.

Public Hearing was opened at 7:57 p.m.

Bill Freeland (4290 Arrowhead Drive) stated that he owns the 11 acres to the northwest. He asked questions about access and how the proposed plan shows a road dead ending near his property.

Nolan explained to Freeland that it is City policy to show potential future roads near areas that may be developed in the future. He said once the property to the north is developed by a developer, the City would require a connection at that time. Freeland appeared to be satisfied with Nolan's explanation.

Freeland said that in the past 15 years the water seems to be creeping up and getting worse every year. Nolan inquired if there may be issues with the outlet structure.

Freeland also said he has concerns with traffic on County Road 116.

He stated that they were concerned about the trees since that is their view from their home; and then if a water tower was constructed it would be that much worse. Nolan said the applicant was proposing a storm water pond in the location of the trees and the water tower would be placed on the east side of the development, not where the trees are currently.

Joe Cavanaugh (property owner) stated that they had gone through the concept plan process with the Planning Commission and City Council. He said they had offered park dedication land from the adjacent property in order to save the trees. He stated that the Park Commission and Council had said they had more interest in the cash which would amount to \$150,000. Nolan asked if the Park Commission didn't want the trees. Weir said during those meetings she pushed heavily to preserve the trees, with homes being placed amongst the trees. She said there isn't anything better than

trees to absorb the water. She said it seems a shame to clear cut the woods in that area. She also said it would help the price point to preserve some of the trees.

Finke noted that, having been part of the conversation, the Council certainly did not recommend only single-family homes spread across the entire site. They spoke specifically about different types of housing and that density would need to be met.

Weir said her voice at the Council was to preserve as much of the trees as possible.

Public Hearing Closed at 8:10 p.m.

Nolan stated that he respects the difficulties that an applicant is up against with City regulations, fees, and the market, but the plan as presented is not interesting. He said that he would like to push it back to the applicant to get creative, such as different housing types.

Martin stated that she agrees with Nolan's comments. She said certainly the plan does not justify a waiver of the tree replacement requirements.

V. Reid stated that she is concerned about any project that puts more traffic onto County Road 116. She thinks that the access point being on the west side would draw traffic towards Arrowhead instead of County Road 116.

R. Reid stated that the Comp Plan speaks a lot about a variety of housing styles. Developers are saying there is not a market today, but the Comprehensive Plan is a longer term vision. Today's market should not be able to force the City to change its original objectives.

Anderson stated that he believes the Commission and Council have shown a good deal of flexibility. With a good plan, there may be some way to make it a great neighborhood for the developer and the City.

Nolan suggested that it sounds like the Commission is not going to recommend approval of the plan. He asked the applicant if they would be interested in evaluating the feedback and adjust the plan, in which case the Commission could table the application until a future meeting.

Cavanaugh stated that his brother Dick is 78 years old and has owned the property for a long time. He said they had offered Park Dedication land from the adjacent site and the Park Commission was not interested.

Nolan stated that he cannot in good conscience recommend approval of a plan because someone has owned property for 56 years.

Martin stated that she would give up on creativity a bit in order to preserve the trees and hit the density.

Wolter said they could certainly look at moving the entrance to the west and the possibility of some twin homes.

Martin inquired if adding twin homes would allow for more tree preservation. Nash said they would have to look into it.

Motion by Nolan, seconded by Foote, to recommend denial of the subdivision because housing is not consistent, tree preservation regulations, circulation adds congestion to County Road 116, not recommending the stormwater pond within the park (and thus not meeting density), single family backing up on intense commercial development, and interference with future Tamarack. Motion carries unanimously. (Absent: Williams)

7. **Council Meeting Schedule**

Nolan stated that he would attend the November 20th Council meeting.

Comments for the good of the order:

Anderson suggested that the Planning Commission discuss infrastructure fees.

Martin recommended that the Commission discuss private road maintenance and whether the City would want to assess the projects.

4. **Adjourn**

Motion by R. Reid, seconded by Foote, to adjourn at 9:24 p.m. Motion carried unanimously. (Absent: Williams)