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September 25, 2019

Dusty Finke AICP
City Planner
City of Medina
2052 County Road 24
Medina, MN 55340-9790

Re: Weston Woods of Medina; Comprehensive Plan Amendment and PUD Concept Plan for PIDs 03-118-23-42-0001, 03-118-23-41-0001, and 03-118-23-43-0005

Dear Mr. Finke:

We represent Mark of Excellence Homes (“MOE”) regarding the proposed Weston Woods of Medina project (“Project”) located in the City of Medina (“City”). The Project includes development on approximately 131 gross acres of land located north of Highway 55 and East of Mohawk Drive with a mix of single-family development, twinhomes, and row townhomes. This letter and the accompanying materials constitute a request for the following applications by MOE: 1) comprehensive plan (“Comp Plan”) amendments, and 2) a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Concept Plan (“Concept Plan”) for a project with an approximate overall density of 3.0 units per acre.

Background and Project Description

The Project includes two properties (“Properties”), consisting of the “Cavanaugh Parcel,” totaling approximately 54.91 acres, located east of Mohawk Drive and north of Highway 55; and the “Roy Parcel” an approximately 75.42-acre parcel located east of Mohawk Drive and immediately north of and adjacent to the Cavanaugh Parcel. MOE is seeking to develop the Properties with a mix of single-family homes, twinhomes, and row townhomes with an average overall density of approximately 3.0 units per acre. The Roy Parcel will include approximately 47.33 acres of wetland and buffer area with no designated open space. The Cavanaugh Parcel will include approximately 26.42 acres of wetland and buffers, and 5.47 acres of parks.

	Gross Area	Wetlands/Buffer	Parks/Open Space	Net Developable
Roy Parcel	75.42 acres	47.33 acres	0.00 acres	28.09 acres
Cavanaugh Parcel	54.91 acres	26.42 acres	5.47 acres	21.10 acres
Project Total	130.33 acres	73.75 acres	5.47 acres	49.19 acres

The net developable acreage is based on the Metropolitan Council’s formula for calculation of net residential density calculated by the gross acres less wetlands, buffers, public parks and open space, arterial road rights-of-way, and floodplains. The resulting density of the proposed PUD Concept Plan is as follows:

Proposed			
	Net Developable	Dwelling Units	Density
Roy Parcel	28.09 acres	76 proposed	2.7 units/acre
Cavanaugh Parcel	22.51 acres	74 proposed	3.2 units/acre
Project Total	49.67 acres	150 Units	3.0 units/acre

The proposed 3.0 units per acre of density will be allocated among single-family residences, twinhomes, and row townhomes as follows:

Housing Types			
	Acres	Number	Density
Single-Family Residences	16.96 acres	41 Units	2.4 units/acre
Twinhomes	28.09 acres	76 Units	2.7 units/acre
Row Townhomes	4.14 acres	33 Units	8.0 units/acre
Project Total	49.19 acres	150 Units	3.0 units/acre

The Project will also include the improvement of Chippewa Road from Mohawk Drive on the west to Arrowhead Drive on the east, as well as the completion of a water loop connected to the City's municipal water system.

Land Use Applications

MOE is seeking the following land use applications:

1. **Comp Plan Amendments**

MOE is seeking the following Comp Plan Amendments to accommodate the Project.

a. **Comp Plan Amendment: Roy Parcel (2025 to 2020 Staging)**

The Roy Parcel is currently designated with the Low-Density Residential (LDR) future land use designation with staging for 2025 development. MOE is seeking a Comp Plan amendment to re-guide the Roy Parcel from 2025 staging to 2020 with flexibility granted through the PUD to allow development as early as 2019.

b. **Comp Plan Amendment: Cavanaugh Parcel (Business to Low-Density Residential and Medium-Density Residential Future Land Use Designation)**

The Cavanaugh Parcel is currently designated with a future land use designation of Business. MOE is seeking a Comp Plan Amendment of the future land use designation of the Cavanaugh Parcel from Business to a combination of LDR on portions of the property planned for single family residential and Medium-Density Residential (MDR) designation to accommodate the proposed townhome development.

2. **Planned Unit Development Concept Plan**

The predominant zoning district for the Properties is Rural Residential-Urban Reserve (RR-UR), with approximately 5.25 acres of the southernmost portion of the Cavanaugh Parcel zoned as Commercial-Highway (CH). MOE is seeking a review and approval of the PUD Concept Plan, with a request for rezoning to the Planned Unit Development (PUD) District to follow at a later date. The PUD District will allow for the flexible application of the City's Zoning Code ("City Code"), including the flexible distribution of densities over the entire Project area resulting in a density on the Roy Parcel that is higher than otherwise allowed. The distribution of density is required to make the project work within the market, and as a result of the increased densities MOE is able to offer higher standards of site and building design, along with the preservation of high-quality natural resources, including mature tree stands and substantial wetlands located on the Properties. Additionally, the increased density allows MOE to provide a substantially higher investment in infrastructure, which would not be possible without the flexibility allowed by the PUD.

Following approval of the Comp Plan amendments above, approval of the PUD will be consistent with the Comp Plan designation and staging of the Properties. The overall density will be 3.0 units per acre over the entire Project, with higher density located near Highway 55. The Project is consistent with the standards and purpose of the City's PUD Ordinance under Section 827.25 as follows:

- a. Innovations in development to the end that the growing demands for all styles of economic expansion may be met by greater variety in type, design, and placement of structures and by the conservation and more efficient use of land in such developments.**

The Project is designed to accommodate a mix of housing types and densities while preserving and protecting wetlands, tree stands and open spaces. The Project includes a combined 73.75 acres of wetland and buffer conservation areas, as well as 5.47 acres of wooded open space or parks. The five-acre park/open space on the Cavanaugh Parcel includes over 300 hardwood trees, which have been preserved as parkland with playground equipment and 20 parking spaces to ensure community accessibility. The park area will become a neighborhood asset providing open space and trail facilities for use by the residents of the development and the general public. This protects and preserves one of the City's natural resources and meets or exceeds the 10 percent park dedication requirement under City Code Section 820.31.

- b. Higher standards of site and building design.**

The PUD allows the Project to provide a variety of high-quality housing styles, including single family lots, twinhomes and row townhomes in a high-quality design, integrated into the open space and wetlands. The single family homes will be located adjacent to natural areas, including wetlands, park and open space, and preserved woodlands. The townhomes have high-end features and the exteriors will use an extensive amount of glass creating an abundance of natural light on three sides. Deep garages will provide homeowners room to store trash and recycling bins indoors. To improve exteriors, MOE has engaged a designer to create a variety of architectural features to enhance the front of the building units. The addition of the row homes in the center of the south parcel provides a housing option for newer families close to the park and open space. This amenity makes the row homes highly valuable and marketable.

- c. The preservation, enhancement, or restoration of desirable site characteristics such as high quality natural resources, wooded areas, wetlands, natural topography and geologic features and the prevention of soil erosion.**

To the north on the Roy Parcel, more than two-thirds of the site will be preserved as wetlands and woodlands providing natural buffer areas within the development. All of the proposed residences on the Roy Parcel are clustered on the west of the property, which provides more than a 1,300 foot buffer between the Bridgewater neighborhood to the east and the nearest home in the development. To the south on the Cavanaugh Parcel, nearly sixty percent (60%) of the site is preserved in wetlands, woodlands, park and open space. Specifically, the developer will dedicate a 5-acre park/open space area preserving the existing wooded area including over 300 hardwood trees. This preservation effort will become a defining feature of the development and will preserve an area of significant trees.

- d. Innovative approaches to stormwater management and low-impact development practices which result in volume control and improvement to water quality beyond the standard requirements of the City.**

The Concept Plan shows a number of ponding areas designed to manage storm water and minimize storm water impacts from the development. MOE will work with the City to incorporate low impact development and best stormwater practices throughout the development. For instance, the plan proposes construction of stormwater reservoirs to provide irrigation to landscaping on the Roy parcel.

- e. Maintenance of open space in portions of the development site, preferably linked to surrounding open space areas, and also enhanced buffering from adjacent roadways and lower intensity uses.**

The Project preserves and enhances wetland and woodland areas creating large buffers to surrounding development and large portions of the Properties will be dedicated as parkland and open space. MOE will work with the City to enhance buffering from adjacent roadways and lower intensity uses. For instance, heavy landscaping and tree planting along Mohawk Road will provide a buffer between homes and roadways.

- f. A creative use of land and related physical development which allows a phased and orderly development and use pattern and more convenience in location and design of development and service facilities.**

The Project is the result of a creative use of land that allows the placement of a variety of home sites on the Properties in a way that preserves wetlands, woodlands, and open space while still meeting the required density contained within the City's land use regulatory documents. The Project ranges in density with the higher density located nearest to Highway 55 and a range of density north of the highway. The overall net density in the Project is 3.0 units per acre, which is consistent with both City and Metropolitan Council guidance for new residential development.

- g. An efficient use of land resulting in smaller networks of utilities and streets thereby lower development costs and public investments.**

MOE has designed the PUD to maximize the use of developable land while preserving natural features such as wetlands, woodlands, and upland buffers to nearby development. On both of the Properties, the footprint and density of housing maximized in a manner that reduces the impervious surfaces and reduces the in the size and length of infrastructure serving the development. In addition, MOE has proposed construction of new infrastructure at its own expense, including the extension of Chippewa Road between Mohawk Drive and Arrowhead Road, as well as the water loop which will serve surrounding neighborhoods and reduce the City's need for public investment in infrastructure. However, any oversizing of public required by the City must be borne by the City. These improvements far exceed the typical infrastructure investment that is required under such a development.

h. A development pattern that effectuates the objectives of the Medina Comprehensive Plan. (PUD is not intended as a means to vary applicable planning and zoning principles.)

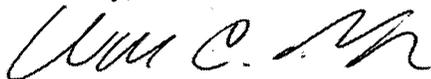
MOE has requested a Comp Plan amendment to develop the Project as a comprehensive PUD with a mix of development types. The requested Comp Plan amendments will allow for the concurrent development of both the Roy and Cavanaugh parcels as a single residential PUD offering a variety of housing types and densities, while preserving natural and opens spaces. Preserving the wetlands, buffers, open space, and tree stands is consistent with the Comp Plan, and extending Chippewa Road and the water loop will further the Comp Plan's infrastructure goals. The Project will effectuate the objectives of the Comp Plan as proposed.

i. A more desirable and creative environment than might be possible through the strict application on zoning and subdivision regulations of the City.

The use of the PUD not only results in a more desirable and creative environment, but is absolutely essential to approval of the plan as proposed and permits a mix of densities while preserving natural and opens spaces. The Project provides several public benefits, including the preservation of woodlands, wetlands, and open spaces and a reduction in density and impervious surface as discussed above, along with the extension of Chippewa Road and the water loop.

Please contact me with any questions about the above narrative or the enclosed materials.

Sincerely,



William C. Griffith, for
Larkin Hoffman

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