

CITY OF MEDINA
PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday April 14, 2020

1. **Call to Order:** Chairperson Reid called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Planning Commissioners Aaron Amic, Peter Galzki, Ron Grajczyk, Beth Nielsen, Kerby Nester, Cindy Piper, and Robin Reid.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Council Member Todd Albers, Planning Director Dusty Finke, Associate Planner Deb Dion, and Planning Intern Ben Schneider.

2. **Public Comments on Items not on the Agenda**

No comments made.

3. **Update from City Council Proceedings**

Albers reported that the Council met the previous week. He noted that the Council approved a number of items recommended by the Planning Commission under the Consent Agenda. He stated that the Council also held a public hearing related to an Ordinance amendment related to surface use of Lake Independence, specifically related to a request to raise the high-water mark. He explained that the higher than normal water level of the lake has triggered no wake days that prevent normal recreational use of the lake and therefore the request is to raise the high-water level in attempt to allow more recreational use.

4. **Planning Department Report**

Finke provided an update.

5. **Lennar (US Home Corporation) – PID 11-118-23-12-0004 – PUD Concept Plan for development of 138 townhomes on approximately 20 net acres**

Finke presented a request from Lennar for a PUD Concept Plan for Meadowview Townhomes. He noted that the request would include a 138-unit townhome development. He explained that PUD is a zoning designation that allows for some flexibility of the zoning code, noting that the City has a great deal of discretion when reviewing a PUD request. He stated that the subject property is guided for medium density residential, which would equate to five to seven units per acre and is designated for the current staging period. He provided details on the stage one master plan that was completed for the property at the time the Fields of Medina was developed, and this property was split off, noting that this type of townhome development was anticipated at that time. He reviewed the surrounding land uses and highlighted elements of the concept plan including access, the mix of townhome products, and green corridor and trail. He stated that generally the development as proposed is close to the R-3 standards and highlights some of the deviations as proposed. He stated that feedback is requested on the design elements proposed and the density range requested. He provided details on transportation and access and parks and trails. He stated that the City received four comments which were included in the packet and will be entered into the record. He

highlighted some of the staff comments related to landscaping/green corridor and future road improvement plans.

Galzki referenced the minimum size for garage stalls and asked if the change in ordinance was adopted by City Council.

Finke confirmed that the ordinance amendment was adopted by the City Council.

Grajczyk asked for clarification on the density range allowed within R-3.

Finke confirmed that the R-3 zone allows for five to seven units per buildable acre. He explained that the base density would be five units per acre with additional density allowed in return for some of the noted benefits typically provided under a PUD. He stated that based on the recreational opportunities, extra soundproofing amongst the units, and other elements, it would seem the applicant could reach 6.25 units per acre without incorporating additional elements. He stated that the applicant states that the elements they are providing would equate to the seven units per acre but advised that is up for discussion.

Nielsen asked if the applicant would reach the seven units per acre if the garage size reduction was not approved.

Finke stated that would be a question for the applicant as that could impact the setbacks and number of units. He stated that the Planning Commission should provide feedback on the elements proposed in the PUD, as the applicant can use that feedback prior to moving forward to plan submission.

Paul Tabone, Lennar, stated that he has been working with staff for the past few months to reach this point. He thanked the City and staff for their assistance. He stated that he believes they can accommodate a shift of the western portion of the trail more to the north along Meander, which would increase the buffer area and provide an opportunity for more landscaping. He stated that Lennar built a very similar townhome product that was successful in the Enclave community and used that layout in designing this site. He stated that he understands that there have been ordinance updates related to garage size since that time. He stated that these townhomes are the same square footage and garage size as the Enclave, and other developments they have built across the metro.

Nielsen asked how the number of units per acre would be impacted if the City does not approve the 380 square foot garage size.

Tabone stated that he would have to go back and determine how that could impact the site plan configuration, specifically the rowhomes along Meander Road. He stated that he appreciates those types of questions because his intent is to gather feedback and determine how Lennar may be able to move forward prior to submitting a formal application.

Amic stated that he did not see a rowhome listed in the product flyer.

Tabone provided clarification on the different model examples shown in the product flyers.

Amic asked if the driveway would be in the back of the rowhome.

Tabone replied that the patios of the rowhomes back up to Meander and the driveways would be in the front. He stated that currently they show a setback of about 45 feet from the back of the building.

Amic stated that he is attempting to think about what the residents in the Fields of Medina would look at. He noted that he would think it more aesthetically pleasing for that residential development to not look at the back of the townhomes.

Grajcyk asked why Lennar is looking at a large townhome development in this area.

Tabone stated that Lennar recognizes a need for this type of product in this area of the metro. He noted that the site is zoned for this type of development and the original development of the Fields of Medina anticipated this type of development. He explained that this would be a typical transition from commercial across Highway 55 and then this denser type of housing near the arterial road, then leading into single family housing. He stated that Lennar has had success with this type of townhome development in Medina and adjacent communities.

Reid opened the public hearing at 7:40 p.m.

Chris Leaf, 1065 Jubert Trail, (email comment read aloud): I'd like to recommend that the Meadow View Townhomes provide a berm and vegetation (trees/shrubs) between their homes and Meander Road since those of us on the other side of Meander are unable to do this due to the filtration trench there.

John Podvin, 1053 Jubert Trail, stated that it would seem that porches would face directly towards each other from this development and the existing single-family homes and believed that it would be beneficial to have landscaping in that area to provide a buffer. He stated that there is already considerable traffic on Pinto attempting to get onto Highway 55 and adding these units would put considerable strain on Pinto Drive. He stated that he has been surprised by the train noise he hears from his home, noting that would be amplified for the townhomes and perhaps the developer could consider something to mitigate that noise for the residents that would live in the townhomes.

Reid asked if the City is working towards a silent crossing at that location.

Finke stated that the goal of the City is to implement a whistle-less crossing with the Tamarack Drive project. He noted that Arrowhead Drive should have a whistle-less crossing later this summer.

Matt Dunn, 1113 Jubert Trail, echoed the comments of the last speaker. He stated that berming to the north side would be encouraged to provide a buffer between the two developments. He noted that he is also concerned with the increase in traffic. He stated that currently there are no footpaths that go from Meander to 116 and was curious as to the type of expansion that would be provided. He asked if there has been any thought to the type of utility disruption that would occur as a result of the development.

Ashok Sunkavalli, 1033 Jubert Trail, asked if a traffic study has been completed. He asked the measures that would be taken during construction to ensure that Meander Road would not become too crowded.

Finke stated that one aspect of the Tamarack Drive study, which is underway, will determine the thresholds of where Tamarack Drive would become a high priority. He noted that the study would determine interim improvements and future improvements that would support anticipated development. He stated that the traffic changes on 116 are driven by growth to the north and the City remains in contact with the County on improvements that could be done to 116.

Atul Dua, 1061 Jubert Trail, echoed the comments requesting the berming and landscaping. He stated that townhomes would be visible from his home, noting that he chose his home because of the open area. He stated that he recognized there would be development on this parcel but 140 townhomes seem to be a high number that would add to the congestion on Meander. He stated that he would like the Commission to consider a berm and additional landscaping to provide a buffer to the Fields of Medina.

Ryan Brokow, 1041 Jubert Trail (email comment read aloud), We had a few questions regarding the meadow ridge development. How many units are in the Enclave development? The proposed townhome development is more dense than we had been led to believe when we built in 2013. The FOM residents built here partly because of the rural nature of the area. This defeats that vision. We believe strongly that front facing units are important to the current residents across Meander. All of the surrounding suburbs in a 3 mile radius are building townhomes and filling the need for higher density demand in this area of the metro. Has there been any research to evaluate this? Thank you.

Mahesh Purama, 1100 Jubert Trail, echoed the comments of the last two speakers. He commented that this proposal seems to be very dense and would add a lot of traffic. He asked if the residents would have another opportunity to provide input as this moves along. He asked the type of housing this would be, whether it would be market rate or affordable housing.

Reid closed the public hearing at 7:56 p.m.

Piper stated that she is concerned about Meander Road and asked what could be done to create a buffer between the roadway and the residents across the street that do not have much of a buffer. She was also curious as to why this many townhomes would be proposed, as that would add a lot of traffic. She was hoping that the number of homes could be reduced.

Tabone stated that he could address some of the questions now, while some elements would need to be delayed as he would need to go back to his team to determine if those elements could be an option. He stated that Lennar receives regular updates on products and the types of housing that are desired and trending. He stated that the townhomes are targeted toward young families and young professionals, as starter homes. He stated that they have also had interest from empty nesters because the townhomes are association maintained and have snowplowing and yard maintenance. He stated that the density proposed is within the range but acknowledged that they are attempting to come in at the top of that range. He explained that they have already decreased the density to fit within this range. He explained the benefit in infrastructure to laying out the development in this manner. He stated that they are amenable to having the berm and landscaping near Meander, noting that if they do shift the trail it would provide the space to do that. He stated that they will consider the comments related to the train noise, noting that they are working to exceed the minimum noise rating between units and could explore other options to mitigate that noise. He commented that he lives along a busy road or near railroad tracks and noted that there are people out there that are willing to put up with some level of noise. He stated that one of the recommendations from the City was to complete a traffic analysis and noted that he will be reaching out to the City to gather data for Meander Road and will work with staff on that. He stated that the purpose of the trail and open space corridor is to provide walkability and noted that they would work with staff to determine the best layout on the property they control. He stated that utilities are available in Jubert Trail and the development would tie into those. He noted that they would work with the City on that connection. He stated that they are attempting to work within the regulatory framework established by the City for the property. He stated that

they are working with Hennepin County Land Trust to determine if offering an affordability element would be an option as this moves forward.

Reid noted that the purpose of a concept plan review is for the Commission to provide input to the developer prior to submission of a formal application.

Ryan Brokow, 1041 Jubert Trail (email comment read aloud): A lot of wildlife and the stream on the proposed land use. Anything done to address protecting wildlife areas?

Finke noted that there is information within the staff report related to the wetland buffers, noting that the required wetland buffers are being provided. He stated that there would be some impacts to the fingers of the wetlands, but the large wetland to the south would not be impacted as proposed. He noted that one additional resident would like to provide input.

Jason Taffe, 1133 Jubert Trail, asked when the Tamarack improvements would be put in place compared to the timing for this development. He stated that he would find it difficult to anticipate the increase in traffic to Meander if the Tamarack improvements are not implemented with this development.

Finke stated that some of the deliverables from the Tamarack study would be to review the capacity at Meander, determining when the connection would be necessary, and to determine if interim improvements would be beneficial.

Nielsen stated that she likes the comments related to the transition from commercial to this density and then the Fields of Medina. She stated that she did not vote in favor of the ordinance amendment to reduce garage size and therefore would not support this further garage size reduction.

Galzki stated that he would like to see the back-to-back townhomes on the western side shifted down, which would allow the loops to be connected east/west and would allow for additional buffer along Meander. He stated that he does like the trail in the middle. He stated that while a garage size of 360 square feet is standard for Lennar, he believes that it would be worth the developer's time to find small modifications that could increase that size. He stated that this request meets the staging and zoning and appreciates those elements. He stated that perhaps it would be helpful for the developer to hold some neighborhood meetings with residents of the Fields of Medina to gather their input prior to submission of formal plans, which could perhaps help to make the process smoother going forward.

Nester commented that she agrees that the development is overall too dense. She stated that there are several concessions proposed, especially related to wetland impacts, therefore creating the additional density would further impact the wetlands. She stated that she also voted against the ordinance reducing the garage size and would not support a lesser garage size.

Amic agreed that if the developer had shown up three months ago, they would have been asking to reduce a large amount in garage size. He stated that the garage size was already reduced through ordinance to 400 square feet and did not believe that the reduced garage size would be approved because even passing the 400 square feet through the Planning Commission was a tough sell. He stated that he lives in the Enclave and commented that it is a well-built home, noting that Lennar has been the best builder that he has personally worked with on building his homes. He stated that the Enclave is a well-done development, but the garages seem too small, as trash cans and vehicles are usually outside of the garage. He

asked the developer to think about what would be done with the homes facing the Fields of Medina, whether that is done with buffer or forward facing the homes.

Nielsen stated that garage size was a recently discussed topic and the Commission was hard pressed to even get to the 400 square feet. She stated that this would increase traffic on Meander and believed that should be another high priority item for the developer.

Reid stated that she does like the townhomes and that this would provide more variety of housing products and would serve as a good transition. She stated that in order to qualify for a PUD the applicant would need to exceed the basic standards. She noted that she would need additional details on how the applicant is going above the required standards. She stated that she would like to see a centrally located tot lot, if this is going to be marketed to young families. She stated that perhaps landscaping could be installed now between the townhomes and future commercial area to establish that buffering. She stated that she would also like to see varying colors in the townhomes to ensure that the homes do not all look the same.

Grajcyk stated that it is nice to see a transition from commercial to townhomes, to single family. He stated that this would definitely be a lot of units in a smaller space but understands that the property is zoned to support that use. He stated that the trail would be great and would like to see it closer to Meander. He hoped that Lennar has heard the feedback related to garage size, as he did not think the Commission would support less than 400 square feet. He noted that it would be great to see some landscaping put into the PUD as that would allow people to see what could be done to alleviate the concerns with noise and screening. He referenced the issue of traffic and stated that the added traffic could really impact the intersection of Pinto and Highway 55. He noted that he experiences similar problems at 24 and Highway 55 with the timing of the lights.

Tabone thanked the Commission for its input. He clarified that the existing utilities are in Meander Road and believed that they would hook up at Meander and Jubert.

Finke stated that the developer has received the input of the Commission, noting that the Park Commission will have an opportunity to provide comments the following night with the City Council reviewing the concept the following Tuesday.

6. **Cris and Jim Stetler – 1832 Medina Road – Conditional Use Permit for Construction of an Accessory Structure in Excess of 5,000 Square Feet**

Ben Schneider presented a request to construct an accessory structure over 5,000 square feet at 1832 Medina Road. He noted that the site received approval for the construction of a home the previous year, which has not yet been built. He provided details on the proposed accessory structure which would be a barn, indoor riding arena and storage area. He identified the wetlands on the site, along with the pasturable land. He noted that both the home and accessory structure would have their own driveways. He stated that a CUP is required for an accessory structure over 5,000 square feet and referenced the criteria that are reviewed for a CUP. He reviewed some of the architectural details that would be proposed. He provided details on animal density, noting that the survey claims 12.9 grazable acres but staff is unsure if that is the correct figure because of the wooded area on the site. He noted that the site could support up to 11 animals, but the applicant would propose eight. He stated that staff recommends approval of the request, subject to the conditions noted in the staff report.

Jim Stetler, applicant, stated that he is present if anyone has any questions.

Piper asked if this is planned to be used commercially.

Stetler replied that this would only be used for his horses.

Reid opened the public hearing at 8:41 p.m.

Jerry Roehl, 1735 Medina Rd., stated that he is in favor of the project and has no objections.

Reid closed the public hearing at 8:42 p.m.

Nester commented that this seems to be a good use of the space.

Nielsen agreed that this is a great design and use of space.

Galzki agreed that this will be a great use of the space and will be a great addition to the view along the roadway.

Reid asked if there would be night lighting on the barn.

Stetler stated that they have not gotten that detailed into the planning but that would be workable. It was noted that perhaps there would be security lighting at the entryway, but they would not go beyond that.

Motion by Piper, seconded by Nester, to recommend approval of the Conditional Use Permit for the construction of an accessory structure over 5,000 square feet with the conditions recommended in the staff report.

A roll call vote was performed:

Amic	aye
Nester	aye
Nielsen	aye
Galzki	aye
Piper	aye
Grajcyk	aye
Reid	aye

Motion carried.

7. **Approval of the March 10, 2019 Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.**

Motion by Galzki, seconded by Piper, to approve the March 10, 2019, Planning Commission minutes with noted changes.

A roll call vote was performed:

Amic	aye
Nester	aye
Nielsen	aye
Galzki	aye
Piper	aye
Grajcyk	aye
Reid	aye

Motion carried.

8. **Council Meeting Schedule**

Finke advised that the Council will be meeting the following Tuesday and Galzki volunteered to attend in representation of the Commission.

9. **Adjourn**

Motion by Nielsen, seconded by Piper, to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.