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September 30, 2020

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 Development 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 is the narrative in support of the following applications by MOE:

- (1) rezoning to Planned Unit Development (PUD);
- (2) approval of PUD development plan; and
- (3) Preliminary Plat

This narrative describes the Project’s compliance with requirements for approval of the applications, as well as the significant public benefit associated with the Project.

**Background and Project Description**

The Project includes four parcels (the “Properties), consisting of the “Southerly Site,” totaling approximately 52.61 acres, located east of Mohawk Drive and north of Highway 55; and the “Northerly Site” an approximately 74.74-acre parcel located east of Mohawk Drive and immediately north of and adjacent to the Southerly Site. 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 3.2 units per acre. The Northerly Site will include approximately 47.33 acres of wetland and buffer area. The Southerly Site will include approximately 26.42 acres of wetland and buffers, and 7.17 acres of parks and open space.

	<b>Gross Area</b>	<b>Wetlands/Buffer</b>	<b>Parks/Open Space</b>	<b>Net Developable</b>
<b>Northerly Site</b>	74.74 acres	47.33 acres	0 acres	27.41 acres
<b>Southerly Site</b>	52.61 acres	26.42 acres	7.17 acres	19.02 acres
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>127.35 acres</b>	<b>73.75 acres</b>	<b>7.17 acres</b>	<b>46.43 acres</b>

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 Development Plan is as follows:

<b>Proposed</b>			
	<b>Net Developable</b>	<b>Dwelling Units</b>	<b>Density</b>
<b>Northerly Site</b>	27.41 acres	76 proposed	2.80 units/acre
<b>Southerly Site</b>	19.02 acres	74 proposed	3.9 units/acre
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>46.43 acres</b>	<b>150 Units</b>	<b>3.2 units/acre</b>

The proposed units within the Project will be allocated among single-family residences, twinhomes, and row townhomes as follows:

<b>Housing Types</b>		
	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Single-Family Residences</b>	11.92 acres	42 Units
<b>Twinhomes</b>	27.41 acres	76 Units
<b>Row Townhomes</b>	4.76 acres	32 Units
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>46.43 acres</b>	<b>150 Units</b>

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 approval of the following zoning and subdivision applications:

#### **1. Rezoning: Planned Unit Development**

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 Southerly Site zoned as Commercial-Highway (CH). MOE is seeking a rezoning of both Properties to the Planned Unit Development (PUD), along with review and approval of the Preliminary Plat and PUD Development Plan. The PUD District will allow for the flexible application of the City’s Zoning Code (“City Code”) while allowing for higher standards of site and building design, along with the preservation of high-quality natural resources located on the Properties.

The applications are consistent the Comp Plan amendments which were recently approved by the Met Council and subject to conditions adopted by the City Council. The Comp plan amendment moved staging of development from 2025 to 2020 on the Northerly Site. On the Southerly Site, the Comp Plan designation was changed from Business to Mixed Residential (MR) designation to accommodate the proposed mix of residential development and staging of the Properties. The overall density will be 3.2 units per acre over the entire Project, with higher density located on the Southerly Site.

On the Northerly Site, the underlying zoning requested with the PUD is R2. The R2 zoning district is consistent with the Low Density Residential (LDR) land use guiding and allows clustering of smaller lots to support protection and enhancement of natural areas through the preservation of open space, wetlands, and woodlands, as well as buffering from adjacent streets and uses, or the creation of additional recreational opportunities.

	<b>R2</b>	<b>Proposed Twinhomes</b>
Minimum Lot Size (Two-family)	5,000 s.f. per unit	3,948 to 5,500 s.f.
Minimum Lot Width (two-family)	50 feet	42 feet
Minimum Lot Depth	90 feet	94 feet
Front Yard Setback	25 feet	25 feet to curb (equiv. to 13 foot to right-of-way)
Front Yard Setback (garage)	30 feet	25 feet to curb (equiv. to 13 foot to right-of-way)
Side Yard Setback (two-family)	10 feet	30 feet between buildings
Side Yard (corner)	25 feet	25 feet
Rear Yard Setback	25 feet	30 feet
Max. Hardcover	50%	66.4% maximum, not including open space between lots

On the Southerly Site, the underlying zoning requested with the PUD is R3 for the townhomes. The R3 zoning district is consistent with Medium Density Residential (MDR) land use guiding and allows for development of townhome portion of the Project. The underlying zoning requested with the PUD is R2 for the single-family homes. The R2 zoning district is consistent with Low Density Residential (LDR) land use guiding and allows for development of single-family portion of the Project

	<b>R2</b>	<b>Proposed Single Family</b>
Minimum Lot Size	8,000 s.f.	9,738 to 17,058 s.f.
Minimum Lot Width	60 feet	70 feet
Minimum Lot Depth	90 feet	130 feet
Front Yard Setback	25 feet	30 feet
Front Yard Setback (garage)	30 feet	30 feet
Side Yard Setback (combined)	15 feet (10 & 5)	20 feet (10 & 10)
Side Yard (corner)	25 feet	30 feet
Rear Yard Setback	25 feet	30 feet
Collector Setback	40 feet	50 feet
Max. Hardcover	50%	34% maximum

	<b>R3 Requirement</b>	<b>Proposed Townhomes</b>
Minimum Net Area per Unit	7,920 s.f. not including reductions	6,472 s.f.
Maximum Net Area per Unit	8,700 s.f.	6,472 s.f.
Minimum Setback from Perimeter	20 feet	50 feet
Front Yard Setback	25 feet	50 feet
Local Road Setback	40 feet	50 feet
Private Road Setback	25 feet	23 to 26 feet to curb
Minimum Distance Between Buildings	30 feet	25 feet
Max. Hardcover	50%	30.5% for the total area

**2. Consistency with PUD Criteria**

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 a combined 7.17 acres of wooded open space or parks. The seven-acre park/open space on the Southerly Site includes over 300 hardwood trees. 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.

**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, townhomes 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, the Applicant has hired 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 northwest quadrant of the Southerly Site provides a housing option for newer families in proximity to the park and open space.

**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 Northerly Site, 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 Northerly Site are clustered on the west of the property, which provides more than a 1,300-foot buffer between the Bridgewater neighborhood and the nearest home in the development. To the south on the Southerly Site, nearly sixty percent (60%) of the site is preserved in wetlands, woodlands, park and open space. Specifically, the developer will dedicate a 7.17-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 one of the City's finest natural resources.

**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 Development Plan shows several 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 practices throughout the development. For instance, the plan proposes construction of stormwater reservoirs to provide irrigation to landscaping on the Northerly Site.

**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 to 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 the corner of Mohawk Drive and Chippewa Road. The overall net density in the Project is 3.2 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 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, the Applicant has planned construction of new infrastructure, 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.

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

Met Council and the City have approved a Comp Plan amendment that allows for the concurrent development of both the Northerly and Southerly Sites 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 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 impervious surface as discussed above, along with the extension of Chippewa Road and the water loop.

### **3. Public Benefit**

In conjunction with the City Council's review of the PUD Concept Plan on March 17, 2020, the Developer proposed significant and specific public benefit as follows:

#### **a. Park Dedication**

- (1) The Developer will dedicate a park and open space area of 7.17 acres of land which includes the wooded knoll on the Southerly Site.
- (2) The Developer will construct a paved trail segment through the park which is accessible. The estimated cost for the trail is \$110,000.
- (3) The Developer will provide an 8-foot wide bituminous trail from the park entrance to Mohawk Road, then along Mohawk Road up to Chippewa Road. The cost of the trail is \$71,000, not including the value of the right-of-way.
- (4) The Developer will provide an 8-foot wide bituminous trail along the new Chippewa Road, from Mohawk Road to Arrowhead Road. This cost of the trail is estimated at \$150,000. With staff input, the trail may be constructed over the existing Chippewa Road right-of-way to allow for water control between the north and south basins.
- (5) The Developer will provide an internal 8-foot wide bituminous trail from the twin homes on the Northerly Site to the new Chippewa Road. The estimated cost of this improvement is \$18,000.

#### **b. Street Dedication and Construction**

- (1) The Developer will dedicate an 80-foot wide easement from Mohawk Road to Arrowhead Road for the construction of Chippewa Road. The estimated value of the right-of-way is \$220,000. (Note: The Project will require reduced setbacks for the lots on either side of Chippewa Road for the dedication of right-of-way.)
- (2) The Developer will construct and pay for the extension of Chippewa Road from Mohawk Road to Arrowhead Road. We will agree that it will be constructed as a rural street section, except in locations where it is beneficial to construct an urban section for mitigation of floodplain impacts. This construction includes a box culvert under the roadway to provide for stormwater flows north and south of the roadway. The estimated cost of construction of the roadway is \$2,500,000.

- (3) The Developer will construct the sweep connection between Chippewa Road and Arrowhead Road, provided the City acquires the right-of-way from OSI. The Developer will grade the right-of-way and complete that section of roadway.
- (4) The Developer will install a 12" watermain from Mohawk Road to Arrowhead Road. The estimated cost of this project is \$460,000.
- (5) At the City's election, the Developer will also contribute to wetland mitigation in exchange for an equal reduction in connection fees for the twin home project proposed on the Northerly Site.
- (6) The Developer will provide 3.5 to 4 acres of land needed for floodplain mitigation. The estimated value of the acreage is \$395,000. In addition, the Developer will excavate the floodplain mitigation area to a depth and dimension provided by the City.
- (7) The Developer will oversize stormwater ponds within the Project to meet the stormwater requirements for Chippewa Road. If the City and the Developer agree that the most efficient way to manage and treat stormwater for the Chippewa Road project would be to capture and treat stormwater from Mohawk Road, then the Developer will construct and pay the cost of the oversized ponds.

We look forward to working with City staff, the Park Commission, Planning Commission and the City Council on moving these applications and the Project forward. Please contact me with any questions about the above narrative or the enclosed materials.

Sincerely,



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