

**MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP MEETING
CITY COUNCIL
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

JANUARY 11, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a Workshop meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 11th day of January, 2023 in the Conference Room of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Mayor Tom Fischer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and the following members of the City Council were present at roll call:

CITY COUNCIL: Mayor Fischer, Council Members McGraw, T.Miller, Gutierrez and D.Miller. Absent: None.

ALSO PRESENT: City Administrator Chris Heineman, Community Development Director Corrin Wendell and City Clerk/HR Manager Heidi Heller.

DISCUSS VILLAS OF GERVAIS LAKE SUBDIVISION PROPOSAL

The City Administrator explained that the purpose of this workshop is to review the background of the Villas of Gervais Lake subdivision and consider potential changes by the developer to the Preliminary Plat that would reduce or eliminate the requested variances. These options include: 1) Revised development proposal with public road & 7 parcels (Variance for 8-foot reduction of Lot Depth from 130 feet to 122 feet), or, 2) Revised development proposal with private road & 7 parcels (No variances required)

City staff is requesting feedback from the City Council on which of these two options is preferred moving forward. Based on the feedback received by the Council, it is anticipated that the applicant would submit a Preliminary Plat application for the Planning Commission meeting on January 26, and a public hearing would then be scheduled for the City Council meeting on February 8.

The City Administrator explained the unique circumstances on this site that make variances reasonable to grant. He stated these include the steep elevations and the south portion is a floodplain, and due to the topography, Ramsey County will only allow the new road to access Edgerton Street in one location on the north end of the property. He reported that a legal opinion was received from the City Attorney regarding the City Council's denial of the Preliminary Plat and Variances on November 30, 2022, and explained the developer could take legal action regarding this denial, but he prefers not to go that route and would rather work with the city to find an acceptable plan.

The Community Development Director reviewed the changes from the plan presented on November 30, 2022, and the current plan.

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Sean Keatts, Cara Builders, reviewed developments that he has done in the metro area and showed photos of other homes he has built. He stated that he always tries to save as many existing trees as possible.

Fischer stated that he was uncomfortable with the final decision and denial that happened at the November meeting, but noted the Council did not know where things were at with the timeline and felt that they had to make a decision that night. He stated that he likes the changes and the new site plan that is presented now. McGraw stated that he was also uncomfortable with denying the preliminary plat and variances, and that is why he voted the way he did.

The City Administrator explained that everything is in order for the stormwater plans and the applicant will need to finalize permits in order to move forward with the development. He noted the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District has already approved the stormwater management plan for this development.

Fischer stated another issue is a public road versus a private road, but a private road will require a homeowner's association that is only split between the seven homes on this new street, which would be very expensive. McGraw stated he prefers that it be a public road so that the city maintains it and there are no issues that arise between the neighbors. He stated it is not practical to have a private road. D.Miller stated that it makes sense to have it be a public road. The City Administrator stated it is not staff's recommendation that it be a private road. There was Council consensus to require the road to be public.

McGraw asked Mr. Keatts what type of homes he is planning to build now. Mr. Keatts stated that he had never intended to build "starter homes" and has always intended to build homes in the 2,200-3,200 square foot size. He explained that the only difference in this development would be the homes on the west side could be tuck-under style homes in order to reduce the earthwork needed on those lots.

There were no additional questions from the Council. The City Administrator stated that tonight the Council was asked for feedback and direction on whether they are comfortable with the site plan changes and having Mr. Keatts move forward with an updated Preliminary Plat and variance requests.

T.Miller stated that her questions have been answered and she is comfortable with the plan now. McGraw stated that he is more comfortable now and is happy with how the developer has responded to all of the concerns from the city and the neighbors. He stated that this has always been natural land and it will change the look and feel of the neighborhood, which can be hard. D.Miller stated that the plan changes look positive.

There was Council consensus that they are satisfied with the current site plan and want the new street to be a public street.

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OWASSO BASIN FLOOD RISK REDUCTION PROPOSAL

The Public Works Director explained that the high-water levels in Little Canada from 2014-2019 and the flooding of Twin Lake, led the Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD) to take a look at its entire management area and see what improvements could be made to decrease the likelihood of flooding in the most prone areas. He stated one of the areas of focus that rose to the top is the Owasso Basin area, which is located between the Ryan Industrial Park and North Star Estates manufactured home park off of Country Drive and South Owasso Boulevard. He stated the basin is a chokepoint that holds water coming in from the north and then releases it to Gervais Creek to head south and eventually into Gervais Lake. He stated there are still flooding issues in North Star Estates and the RWMWD has been working with City staff since 2020 on possible ways to reduce the flood risk in the park.

Sam Redinger, Barr Engineering, explained that the intent of tonight is to give the City Council an overview of their work so far and give input on what efforts they are making. He gave a background on the ongoing flood reduction efforts in the Owasso Basin area. He stated they have identified structures, including homes, that are at risk of flooding. He reported they have done a bypass pipeline feasibility study and determined three projects that could be done right away. He stated that Phase 1 & 2 have been completed, and the Phase 3 analysis is ongoing with a focus on the North Star Estates manufactured home park. He explained that most of the homes in North Star Estates would not have flooding inundate their home because they are elevated, but having flood water outside their home is also problematic. He stated there is one home in North Star Estates that is on a low lot and the home is older so it is not elevated as high as the current code would require. He stated it is cheaper to buy this home, remove it and regrade the lot, than it would be to lower the area water level enough to fully protect this home as it is. He explained that the pond basin on the north side of North Star Estates could also be dredged in order to increase the water storage capacity there. The Public Works Director explained that the basin was constructed in the early 1990's to try and protect the North Star manufactured home park from the frequent flooding events that occurred following most large rain events.

Mr. Redinger explained that their next steps are to summarize the alternatives and bring to the RWMWD Board of Managers for review and consideration.

PIONEER PARK STORMWATER REUSE PROJECT

The Parks & Rec/Community Services Director stated that there is a proposal to reuse stormwater to irrigate Pioneer Park instead of the current practice of using well water. He stated that the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD) has a program called "Targeted Retrofit Program" that can provide funding for this type of project.

Paige

Jen Koehler, Barr Engineering, explained the components of a stormwater reuse system. She noted there are existing stormwater ponds in the park, and stated if the top one foot of water from these existing ponds was used, it could furnish 80-90% of the water needed for the 11 acres that are irrigated. Paige Ahlborg, RWMWD, stated the RWMWD Board has seen this plan and

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approved it for their Targeted Retrofit Program which will provide the funding needed for the design and technical assistance, construction and two years of maintenance, and the City would then take over the maintenance for the future.

The Parks & Rec/Community Services Director stated the he reviewed the City's guiding documents, such as the Parks Master Plan, to see if this type of project is something the City had already determined to be supportive of, and he feels the answer is yes. Ms. Koehler reviewed the timeline, and stated the bidding and construction could occur from winter 2023-summer 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Thomas Fischer, Mayor

Attest:

Christopher Heineman, City Administrator