

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
PLANNING COMMISSION
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

MAY 5, 2022

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 5th day of May, 2022 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Chair Chris Kwapick called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and the following members of the Planning Commission were present at roll call:

PLANNING COMMISSION: Johnson, Kulousek, Kwapick, Mitchell, Buesing, Thorson, and Quarles (arrived at 6:10 p.m.

ALSO PRESENT: Community Development Director/ Planner Corrin Wendell

ADOPT AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

MINUTES

Commissioner Buesing made a motion to approve the April 4, 2022 Planning Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Kulousek seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

No comments.

PUBLIC HEARING

COMMISSIONER BUSINESS: PRELIMINARY PLAT – U.S. HOME, LLC, AND LENNAR PID# 05-29-22-21-0024, #05-29-22-21-0032, #05-29-22-21-0031, #05-29-22-21-0030, AND #05-29-22-21-0029 – CASE #1412

The Community Development Director presented a preliminary plat request from U.S. Home LLC and Lennar to construct a townhome community with 178 townhomes including a mix of row townhomes and back-to-back townhomes. She stated that the property is composed of five parcels for a total of 19.77 gross acres which includes 4.6 acres that are allocated to an overhead powerline easement. She stated that the proposed density would be nine units per acre and while the current zoning is R-1, the property is guided for medium to high density within the Comprehensive Plan. She stated that the proposal would include a rezoning to match the guiding of the Comprehensive Plan. She displayed the development site plan as proposed noting a

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proposed linear park or trail connection on the plan and highlighting street extensions and proposed access. She stated that the neighborhood would be served by public and private streets and public utilities. She reviewed details on storm water management, parking, reforestation, and landscaping. She stated that a neighborhood meeting was held in March and as a result they changed the layout to reduce density on the south end and increase density on the northern portion of the site. She noted that a variance would be requested in order to accommodate the front yards to accommodate those density changes. She also provided details on the existing gas line and related easement and noted that the blanket easement would be reduced to 25 feet from the center of the pipe. She provided details on the different home styles that would be proposed within the project as well as architectural details that would provide variation. She noted that this community will help to deliver the City's vision detailed in the Comprehensive Plan to be an age friendly community and provide housing for different types of residents. She reviewed the proposed public park and trails within the development. She stated that the applicant has complied with the major subdivision requirements and general zoning code requirements. She stated that the proposal was reviewed by the Development Review Committee and highlighted the Comprehensive Plan goals that would be met through this proposal. She highlighted the next steps in this process including a public hearing to be conducted by the City Council on May 11th.

Chair Kwapick noted that there will be a number of private roads built into the development along with the primary public access road. He asked if there has been discussion of any other public roads. His concern was that all of the traffic would access from the one public road.

The Community Development Director provided additional details on the access points, noting that the access on County Road D will alleviate all of the traffic using Vanderbie and a driveway will extend onto County Road D on the northwest side of the development.

Chair Kwapick asked and received confirmation that there would not be additional access from the south other than Vanderbei.

The Community Development Director stated that the intent is to encourage folks to go north.

Commissioner Mitchell referenced the traffic analysis and asked what else would be done to avoid Edgerton.

The Community Development Director stated that the report did not advocate for a traffic signal in that location. She stated that traffic calming measures could be added including sidewalks, boulevard trees, and having the street at a minimum width to encourage slow driving.

Bob Barth, WSB, stated that the crash data and concerns exists prior to the study. He stated that they are reminding the County that this is something that will need to be dealt with in the future. He stated that most of the intersections around the development operate at a high level and this development would have minimum impact.

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Commissioner Mitchell asked if the design could divert traffic from Edgerton.

Mr. Barth replied that they need full access from Vanderbie to County Road D. He stated that people make their own decisions on which access and direction to travel. He stated that the traffic generated from the development would still allow for a high function at Edgerton. He stated that the issue at Edgerton is sight distance and is something the County would need to address in the future. He stated that there would be stop signs at both Allen and County Road D.

Commissioner Buesing asked and received confirmation there would be a stop sign at the driveway shown going to County Road D.

Commissioner Johnson asked whether these units would be owned or rented.

Mr. Barth replied that these would be owner occupied units.

Chair Kwapick welcomed any comments from members of the public.

Robert Rudolph, 525 Allen Avenue, stated that his lot is about one third of an acre. He stated that when you remove the easement and ponds he would determine about 12 units per acre, which would be similar to placing four townhome units on his property. He commented that this seems to be a high level of density. He recognized that the density was most likely calculated on the overall property size.

476 Allen Avenue, stated that he is confused by the total number of units as a letter he received mentioned 184 units, but the presentation mentioned 178 units. He was unsure if those numbers were going to be combined for over 300 units.

The Community Development Director replied that the project would propose 178 units and after the change in layout stemming from the neighborhood meeting, the total unit count had been reduced.

Mr. Rudolph was concerned with the amount of traffic that would come onto Allen Avenue, which was previously a dead-end street. He stated that he would prefer a horseshoe design for the private road. He asked for details on the sidewalk mentioned along Vanderbei.

The Community Development Director replied that the sidewalk would run from Allen to County Road D along Vanderbie.

Mr. Rudolph asked the type of pedestrian traffic that would be anticipated for the sidewalk and where those people would be headed. He asked why a sidewalk would be needed.

The Community Development Director replied that the sidewalk would encourage pedestrian activity in the community.

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Mr. Rudolph asked if there would be a four way stop at Allen and Vanderbie or whether it would just stop traffic at Vanderbie, and Allen would continue to be a through street.

Mr. Rudolph commented on push button units that have flashing lights to alert drivers of crossing pedestrians. He recognized the high cost but believed that would help to reduce the potential for an accident between a vehicle and pedestrian. He commented that his property still uses private well for water and asked how this development would impact the aquafer he draws his water from. He found it hard to believe that the two ponds would infiltration the same amount of water that the open land does.

Commissioner Johnson asked if the land was previously functioning farmland and whether the farm was irrigated. It was noted that the land was not watered in that manner.

John, 3075 Edgerton Street, stated that he owns the property immediately north of the powerline on Edgerton. He stated that if it worked, he would sell a portion of that to provide an access from the development to Edgerton. He stated that he spoke with his neighbor to the south and she was in agreement as well.

Jackie Durand, 3043 Edgerton, stated that her entire backyard faces the subject property, and she has enjoyed the open space for many years. She stated that she does not enjoy change but recognized the person that owns the property has decided to retire and it is inevitable that the property will be developed. She appreciated the lower density on the south side of the development and the additional access point. She asked if a berm or fencing could be installed along the property line between the development and existing residents in her area. She noted her preference for that buffer to be provided through landscaping rather than fencing. She believed that this development is the lesser of evils that could be proposed for the site, as higher density could be proposed as could a lower quality product. She believed that this development would be higher quality than the alternative of apartments or commercial development. She believed that the inclusion of an HOA would ensure this development would remain nice. She commented that she supports the development as long as there can be additional buffering for the existing residents.

Karen Plessel, corner of Vanderbie and Allen, stated that her home is small compared to the scale of the homes proposed and agreed a berm would be helpful to provide screening. She referenced the sidewalk that is proposed and had concern with two trees on her property that would perhaps have to be removed to make room. She also asked if she would be tasked to keep the sidewalk in front of her home clean.

Christian Torkelson, 2995 Vanderbie Street, stated that he would hope that if this is approved there is focus on traffic calming measures going south, suggesting bump outs and street tree lining.

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Mr. Rudolph asked if there would be sidewalk on both sides of Vanderbie or just one side.

Mr. Rudolph referenced the comment from the resident at 3075 Edgerton that was willing to part with part of his land for a road. He stated that could be a blessing as it would be close to the location of a pedestrian crossing for the existing trail.

Chair Kwapick welcomed comments from the developer.

Melissa Duce, representing the applicant, stated that they have worked well with staff and the County to provide this updated site plan for review and in response to comments from the neighborhood.

Commissioner Mitchell asked the average number of people for each unit.

Ms. Duce replied that she cannot answer how many people would live in the units but noted that each of the units would have three bedrooms.

Chair Kwapick asked Ms. Duce to address the comments related to requested berming.

Ms. Duce reviewed the changes that were made to the southern portion of the site to eliminate impacts to the existing residents. She stated that the berms are not shown but will be reflected on the grading plan and agreed that would help prevent vehicle lights from shining into the existing homes. She stated that the sidewalk would run on the west side of Vanderbei from County Road D to Allen.

Commissioner Johnson referenced the concern that was raised by a resident related to pedestrian traffic. She stated that there is a large park close to this property that would be appealing to families and therefore that sidewalk would be nice to provide that connection and asked that thought be put into a connection from the Vanderbei sidewalk to Desoto.

Ms. Duce commented that they would hope most residents would use the trail on the western side of the community that would go to Allen and connect to the sidewalk to Pioneer Park.

Mr. Rudolph referenced the comment made from the resident using well water. He stated that he would like to review the depth of the well, noting that they have not yet done a detailed groundwater analysis. He stated that typically a small development of this nature does not impact the aquifer because of the larger capture area. He noted that they would be happy to work with the resident to investigate that concern.

Commissioner Thorson asked if there would need to be direction to investigate the offer from the property at 3075.

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The Community Development Director noted that the applicant can follow up with that property owner and if that were desired, changes could be made to the application at that time.

Commissioner Quarles commented that she is happy with the plat as proposed and is excited to see potential for improvement. She agreed with the comments requesting screening and was happy to see a willingness from the applicant to incorporate those elements.

Johnson introduced the following motion:

RECOMMENDING THE APPROVAL OF THE PRELIMINARY PLAT FOR U.S. HOME LLC AND LENNAR TO CONSTRUCT A TOWNHOME COMMUNITY OF 178 TOWNHOMES AND MOVE FORWARD WITH A PROPOSAL FOR FINAL PLAT, VARIANCE, REZONING, AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Kulousek.
Ayes (7). Nays (0). Motion passed.

COMMISSION BUSINESS: ZONING MAP AMENDMENT

The Community Development Director provided background information on the update on the zoning code and related zoning map. She highlighted the proposed changes to the zoning map through this amendment. She displayed the existing map and compared that to the proposed amended map. She stated that the proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. She stated that the City Council will hold a public hearing to consider this at its May 25th meeting.

Chair Kwapick asked and received confirmation that these changes are directly related to the Comprehensive Plan and related changes to the zoning code, which has been discussed for the past year.

Commissioner Quarles asked if the City is within the nine months the Metropolitan Council outlines for updated related to the Comprehensive Plan.

The Community Development Director replied that the City is outside of that timeline but noted that the Metropolitan Council recognizes that it took the City longer because of the additional updates to the zoning code.

Commissioner Buesing commented that the map is much easier to read than the previous version.

Buesing introduced the following motion:

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***RECOMMENDING APPROVAL FOR A ZONING MAP AMENDMENT TO THE
CITY'S OFFICIAL ZONING MAP***

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Mitchell.
Ayes (7). Nays (0). Motion passed.

REPORTS FROM STAFF

No comments.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

No comments.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.