

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

OCTOBER 13, 2022

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 13th day of October, 2022 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Acting Chair Taylor Johnson 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, Kwapick, Buesing, Thorson, and Quarles. Absent: Kulousek

ALSO PRESENT: Community Development Director, Corrin Wendell

ADOPT AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

MINUTES

Commissioner Kwapick made a motion to approve the August 11, 2022 Planning Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Buesing seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

No comments.

PUBLIC HEARING

COMMISSIONER BUSINESS: FINAL PLAT/VARIANCE/REZONING – U.S. HOME, LLC, AND LENNAR – CASE #1415

The Community Development Director presented a request for final plat for the first addition of Pioneer Commons which includes a rezoning as well as variances to the front and rear setbacks. She reviewed the background information on the case including neighborhood meetings and the review of the preliminary plat by both the Commission and City Council. She stated that the second and third additions will also come back for final plat review. She provided a summary of the items discussed between staff and Lennar at the preconstruction meeting held on September 29th. She presented a development overview of the 19.77-acre property which is currently zoned R-1 but guided for medium and high density residential. She explained that the applicant is

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requesting the property be rezoned to R-2 which does match with the guiding of the property in the Comprehensive Plan. She reviewed the proposed final plat and overall site plan. She noted that there would be less density towards the southern portion of the property with higher density as the development moves north. She summarized the development overview including infrastructure, ponding, landscaping, architecture, the existing gas line location, design examples of the different home products, and public park and trails. She noted that the details from the preliminary plat and final plat remain consistent. She identified the proposed project schedule and noted that all the major subdivision requirements have been met by the applicant. She provided details from the development review committee meeting, the traffic study, and comments from coordinating agencies. She identified elements within the proposed development that would meet goals identified in the Comprehensive Plan. She provided additional details on the rezoning request from R-1 to R-2 as well as the reduced front and rear yard setbacks.

Commissioner Kwapick referenced the extension of Vanderbie Street and asked when that would begin.

The Community Development Director replied that would be part of the first phase.

Commissioner Kwapick stated that there was a potential for a second access when the northern portion of property is developed and asked if that is still part of the plan.

The Community Development Director confirmed that is still part of the plan and provided additional details.

Commissioner Kwapick asked if there have been any discussions about traffic management to encourage more northbound travel rather than placing that burden on roads within existing neighborhoods.

The Community Development Director replied on the traffic calming measures that were added to the plans to encourage people to go north as that would become the easier and quicker method out.

Acting Chair Johnson asked if there are any stops between CR D and Allen on Vanderbie.

The Community Development Director commented that there would be three intersections between those points and was unsure whether those would be two way, or four way stops.

Commissioner Kwapick left the meeting.

Commissioner Quarles asked the speed limits on the roads in the development.

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Paul Tabone, Lennar, replied that typically on private streets they post 20 mph while typical residential would be 30 mph. He noted that he would check with staff and the HOA manager to determine the appropriate speed. He stated that the roads would be narrower to slow speeds.

Commissioner Quarles asked if there would be street parking available.

The Community Development Director replied that residents would park in their garage or driveway with guest parking available and therefore street parking would not be encouraged.

Acting Chair Johnson asked if this would be part of the seasonal on-street parking prohibition.

The Community Development Director confirmed that this area would fall under that regulation.

Commissioner Quarles asked if the City Engineer has reviewed the plan for snow removal.

The Community Development Director confirmed that staff has reviewed the snow removal plan and key areas have been identified for snow storage.

Commissioner Quarles recognized that this will be a phased development and asked how bound the developer would be to the approved preliminary plat when they come back for future approvals in two to three years.

The Community Development Director replied that staff would anticipate that subsequent final plats would remain consistent with the preliminary plat. She stated that any changes proposed would be reviewed at that time.

Mr. Tabone stated that they would work with staff to go through the appropriate reviews.

Commissioner Buesing recognized that this development as proposed helps the City to reach its growth projections of the Metropolitan Council. He asked if the City would be penalized if the density were to change through future phases and the overall density were reduced.

The Community Development Director acknowledged that projections from the Metropolitan Council ebb and flow. She noted that Little Canada is already dense because it is already almost fully built out.

Mr. Tabone commented that staff has been great to work with throughout this process and noted that his team is already working to incorporate the changes outlined in the memorandum and the updated plans will be resubmitted to all agencies.

Acting Chair Johnson opened the floor for members of the public to provide input.

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Mr. Moravetz, 476 Allen Avenue, commented that three existing homes were removed from the property along with all of the trees. He referenced the split between densities and believed that the original plan was to have a gradual change from high to medium whereas this would appear to be mostly high density.

The Community Development Director confirmed that was the projection in the future land use map, prior to the applicant bringing an actual plan forward. She stated that the City Council did request that units be less dense on the southern end and denser on the northern end to provide that transition. She stated that the overall density for the site falls within medium density.

Mr. Moravetz asked for details on the dashed line shown on the plan.

The Community Development Director replied that is the boundary for the first phase.

Mr. Moravetz referenced the sidewalk that will go down Allen to Vanderbie and asked where that would lead to.

The Community Development Director stated that it would end at a crossing and noted that there could be future plans for additional connections. She noted that currently residents are just walking along Allen Avenue. She provided additional details related to pedestrian connections.

Mr. Moravetz asked if the open land would be left wild until developed.

The Community Development Director replied that it would be seeded with grass until developed with future phases.

Mr. Tabone commented that typically when the complete grading they seed with an erosion control mix and once established that is cut a few times per year. He stated that they are looking to perhaps begin the next phase the next year.

Acting Chair Johnson provided additional suggestions for pedestrian connection to the park.

Commissioner Thorson asked if this plan would lock in a number of units for this development.

Mr. Tabone commented that typically they adhere to preliminary approvals, and they would work to remain in compliance with the preliminary plat. He recognized the comments that this density is desired.

Mr. Moravetz agreed with the sidewalk suggestion of Acting Chair Johnson. He asked and received confirmation that the plan would still be to direct construction traffic north and asked if anything would be done to prevent truck traffic from going south. He asked if jersey barriers could be used to prevent traffic from traveling south until the homes are occupied.

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The Community Development Director replied that there would be signage and both the City and Lennar would monitor that situation. She stated that jersey barriers would not be used as they would want access for emergency vehicles. She noted that once the roads are open, general traffic would be allowed to use the roads.

Jackie Durant, 3043 Edgerton Street, commented that Little Canada is only three-square miles and asked how dense the community is expected to be. She asked if there are any stipulations that could prevent an apartment building from coming forward in future phases.

The Community Development Director replied that an apartment building would not be allowed in R-2.

Ms. Durant commented that when the residents in this area built their homes, they had to abide to the ordinances such as setbacks. She hoped that there had not been any backdoor deals or meetings on this proposal. She asked if children would play in these reduced yards or whether they will wander onto adjacent properties which could become a liability issue. She believed that developments should adhere to the City ordinances. She asked if she would be allowed a variance to place a fence along her property line to keep children off her property. She referenced trees which are planted on her property, three or four feet from her property line and expressed concern that those could become damaged during construction.

The Community Development Director explained that the reduced setback does not apply to all areas of the property. She stated that she can follow up with the resident to determine the actual setback near her property.

Ms. Durant commented that she would like assurance that an apartment building would not be proposed on this property in future phases.

The Community Development Director commented that an apartment building would not be allowed under R-2. She stated that the City operates under transparency and does not conduct any backdoor meetings, everything is transparent and open to the public.

Acting Chair Johnson provided additional details on open meeting laws which prevent that type of scenario. She stated that the property adjacent to Ms. Durant's property will be in a future phase.

Mr. Tabone stated that it is the guidance of the Comprehensive Plan that guided the density of this parcel. He explained that the reduced setbacks assist the parcel in achieving the desired density. He noted that townhomes provide a necessary housing product in the market. He noted that not all homes will have setbacks reduced to the allowed minimum. He provided details on the required building codes and materials for townhomes to address concerns related to fire safety. He stated that while they looked at the option for a berm, that would impact their stormwater modeling and therefore could not be incorporated. He stated that he would instead

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propose to enhance landscaping around the border to provide that screening for the neighbors. He hoped that the trees on the neighboring property would not be impacted by construction.

Acting Chair Johnson provided clarification on the boundary of this first phase. She recognized that at times the City setbacks and lot size conflicts with the density requirements of the Metropolitan Council. She also commented that a resident of Little Canada that was living in an apartment and desired to purchase a townhome recently moved to Centerville because that was the closest location, therefore there is a demand for townhomes in the community.

Ms. Durant asked if the decision tonight related to setbacks would only relate to phase one and whether the setbacks for future phases would be determined when those are brought forward.

The Community Development Director stated that the setback variances and rezoning would apply to the entire property at this time and the development plans for each phase would come forward in final plat reviews.

Mr. Tabone commented that the preliminary plat is based off assumptions that these variances would be given and therefore they would want that finalized tonight rather than having to revisit that in each phase.

The Community Development Director read an emailed comment from a resident.

Buesing introduced the following motion:

RECOMMENDING THE APPROVAL OF THE FINAL PLAT 1ST ADDITION FOR U.S. HOME, LLC, AND LENNAR, CONTINGENT UPON

- ***INCORPORATING CITY ENGINEER COMMENTS INTO FINAL PLAT SUBMITTAL***
- ***INCORPORATING RWMWD COMMENTS INTO FINAL PLAT SUBMITTAL***
- ***INCORPORATING RAMSEY COUNTY COMMENTS INTO FINAL PLAT SUBMITTAL***

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Quarles.
Ayes (4). Nays (0). Motion passed.

Quarles introduced the following motion:

RECOMMENDING THE APPROVAL FOR A ZONING MAP AMENDMENT, REZONING, FOR U.S. HOME, LLC, AND LENNAR, TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF LITTLE CANADA, FROM R-1 LOW DENSITY

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***RESIDENTIAL TO R-2 MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL FOR THE
FOLLOWING FIVE (5) PARCELS***

- ***PID # 05-29-22-21-0024***
- ***PID # 05-29-22-21-0029***
- ***PID # 05-29-22-21-0030***
- ***PID # 05-29-22-21-0031***
- ***PID # 05-29-22-21-0032***

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Thorson.
Ayes (4). Nays (0). Motion passed.

Quarles introduced the following motion:

***RECOMMENDING APPROVAL FOR A VARIANCE FOR U.S. HOME, LLC, AND
LENNAR, FOR THE FOLLOWING SETBACKS***

- ***FRONT YARD SETBACKS FROM 25 FEET TO 20 FEET***
- ***REAR YARD SETBACK FROM 30 FEET TO 20 FEET***

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Thorson.
Ayes (4). Nays (0). Motion passed.

REPORTS FROM STAFF

The Community Development Director provided an update on meetings being completed by the group reviewing the proposed transit line. She noted that she will continue to provide the group with updates as those meetings continue.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

No comments.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.