

**CITY OF WEST DES MOINES
DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
Board Room**

Monday, May 3, 2021

Attending:

Council Member Matt McKinney
Council Member Renee Hardman
City Manager Tom Hadden
Deputy City Manager Jamie Letzring
City Attorney Richard Scieszinski
Assistant City Attorney Jessica Spoden
Development Director Lynne Twedt
Development Coordinator Linda Schemmel

Fire Marshal Mike Whitsell
Planner Karen Marren
Planner Brian Portz
Planner Bryce Johnson
Principal Engineer Ben McAlister
Traffic Engineer Eric Petersen
City Engineer Brian Hemesath

Guests:

Item #1 -

John Lassaux
David Bentz
Ben Antons
Terrance Smith
BJ Connolly

Guests:

Item #1 continued -

Doug Wirth
Paul Filean
Kevin Johnson
Zoom User (unidentified)
Unidentified Caller

The meeting of the Development and Planning City Council Subcommittee was called to order at 8:01 AM.

1. 21WDM: Mixed Use Development

Planner Karen Marren summarized the proposed project to be located at the SE corner of Ashworth Road and Jordan Creek Parkway. The project request is for a 4 story Mixed Use Development on the Eastern 9 acres of this PUD, and will include 196 multi-family residential units, a 15,000 square foot restaurant, 8,000 square feet of office/retail space, 180 surface parking stalls, and 288 structure parking spaces. There will be an extension from 76th Street to Jordan Creek Parkway. The applicant is requesting reduced setbacks and parking requirements, increased residential density, increased building height, waiver of a buffer fence to the South property line. The loading area is proposed for the south side of the parking structure. Staff noted an increase in traffic for the area beyond the approved PUD use, based on the traffic study analysis. Traffic Engineer Eric Petersen summarized the findings for the current office plan, and for the proposed use. He noted the traffic load to Ashworth Road and Jordan Creek Parkway would be about the same, however for 76th Street and Aspen, it would be an increased load for commercial and apartment use, rather than office use.

Council Member Hardman asked if the parking would be problematic. Planner Marren responded that the applicant was requesting a waiver of part of the required parking.

Planner Marren informed regarding the change to support commercial zoning, the corresponding changes in height and setback, and the applicant's request to reduce some of those requirements.

Council Member McKinney clarified that the reduction in setback would need to be written into the PUD. Ms. Marren affirmed that to be true.

Council Member Hardman noted that the applicant was not meeting any of the setbacks. Ms. Marren confirmed.

Planner Marren elaborated on the parking required by current zoning, and the applicant's request for reduction.

Council Member Hardman asked for clarification between surface and structured parking. Ms. Marren responded that there is planned a parking deck for the residential use. Council Member Hardman observed that the gap in parking was pretty sizeable.

City Manager Hadden stated that in the past we've had discussions about requiring more parking than needed and adjusting accordingly. Council Member McKinney inserted that he would like to hear the applicant's side regarding the reduction of parking request. Director Twedt responded that about 2 years ago, the City realigned parking requirements to match industry standards. Use of deferral has been implemented to waive parking temporarily but allowing the requirement of additional parking as needed.

Planner Marren commented on the buffer requirements, including fencing, landscaping, and berm. She noted the applicant's request to eliminate the fence requirement from the PUD. Ms. Marren summarized the loading dock area and screening requirements. The proposal includes a loading area that appears to have limited space for turning. Screening would be necessary toward the residential area to the south however the loading would be visible from the street.

Council Member McKinney asked staff's position on the loading area and screening. He asked if there was a way to screen it from the street. Ms. Marren responded that might require a building modification.

City Attorney Scieszinski noted that the traffic numbers were pretty excessive. He pointed out that the increase was significant even before the rest of the PUD was developed and increased the traffic further. He asked how the rest of the PUD would be accommodated if just this project was going to far exceed the whole traffic limit. He asked if that is a concern. Traffic Engineer Petersen noted that when the study is performed, the whole site was considered. Most of the traffic being generated was from this side, and fewer would come from the office side. Mr. Scieszinski asked if the roadways could handle the increase in traffic. Mr. Petersen affirmed that he was confident they could. He noted the patterns would flip with the use changing to residential. This traffic would be outbound during rush hours. It would generate more traffic on 76th and Aspen than straight office use. Also, the bulk of the traffic would be in the evenings and on weekends, which the adjacent residential areas would notice more than day office use.

John Lassaux, CRG Residential, summarized the project. He noted the parking garage would not be visible and explained that the reduction in parking is based on similar projects CRG has operating in other areas. Additional parking would be an option to be added if there is a need in the future, as the parking garage is designed to be added onto. Mr. Lassaux commented on the setbacks relative to the roadway being constructed and the residential to the south. He noted the loading zone could be relocated to the north side of the property, where a restaurant shipment door will be loaded. A drop off and pick up area is planned to have two lanes due to need for more carryout deliveries due to the Covid pandemic. Mr. Lassaux discussed the height request, comparing it with typical suburban property heights for three-story apartment buildings.

Council Member McKinney asked about the setback on the south and the location of the road. He asked about the buffer and the alignment of the road. Mr. Lassaux stated Bishop Engineering and CRG have been working on the position of the road. Part of the design is to align it with existing 76th Street. He stated they've pushed that roadway as far north as they are comfortable, to less the traffic sound and mitigate it from the residential lots and lot line.

Council Member McKinney asked what the conversation with the Parks Department entails. Mr. Lassaux stated with a mixed-use urban footprint building, they don't normally have this

much greenspace. CRG is working with Parks to determine the best way to utilize that, either with a trail, or something more beneficial to the community.

Council Member McKinney voiced a concern regarding the setback to the south public right of way. Director Twedt inserted that Staff do not have a concern regarding the distance from the residential to the south. There is more of a major change on the setback from the west. As long as the area to the south stays open greenspace, Staff are comfortable with how that area sets up. Council Member McKinney asked for more information about the concern to the west. Director Twedt summarized what code requires. The bigger area to the south west area could switch over to attached residential. If this apartment is built first, the developer knows what they are buying into. If the other side is developed first, it will feel like this building encroaches onto it. One answer to that would be to shrink this building.

Council Member McKinney noted a history with the property owners to the north, with their expressed preference to have area rezoned from single family to commercial/office/residential. Having appropriate setbacks and buffers is therefore important toward the residential areas.

Council Member Hardman agreed with the concern regarding the south setback and the west. She said she respects the staff's comments about mitigating circumstances to the south. She noted she's unsure about agreeing to all of the requests to reduce setbacks. Director Twedt noted there may be an alternative way to tie the connecting road down to Aspen. She pointed out the SW area where the reduced setback would be most felt, but it would be a passthrough road, not one which resident live along. She stated the only solution would be to redesign the building or shrink it.

Director Twedt asked Mr. Lassaux regarding more of the setback details on the NW corner of the building to 76th Street. Terrance Smith was asked to respond. He pointed out that it quickly spreads out as one proceeds northward on that road. He commented that 60% of the total site is unbuildable, giving them a significantly restricted building envelope.

Council Member McKinney asked if there's a public safety policy concern that exists relative to having that point of 26 feet rather than what is standard. And whether there is a course of averaging the distance points to come to an agreement. Director Twedt replied that the averaging aspect relates to adding on to built structures. She noted the curb will ensure. Ms. Twedt related this to parcels in Val-Gate which have buildings which don't fit the parcel. The applicant could propose a smaller building which fits the lot. The Val-Gate area doesn't have a mixed-use building. She remarked on a different building which is close to the curb but added that she hasn't heard comments about that being an issue. We don't have a lot of mixed-use urban feel to point to or play off from an experience standpoint.

Council Member McKinney stated he was comfortable with the setbacks. Council Member Hardman expressed appreciation for staff's explanations and stated she could live with it.

Council Member McKinney commented on the parking ratios. With the residential set-up accompanied by restaurant, he asked if Staff had a comparison. Director Twedt stated Staff have much more comfort with it knowing that another deck could be added if needed. She noted Staff are concerned about residential overflowing into commercial, however that would be a market-resolving issue. Staff have done some research with parking ratios based on number of bedrooms. Ms. Twedt stated sometimes you just have to wait and see how it works.

Council Member McKinney noted his concerns had been addressed, he thought the elevation and building design looked good. Council Member Hardman stated that all of the nuances vetted by the staff were helpful.

Direction: Council Members were supportive of the project as presented.

2. Upcoming Projects – A map was provided with a brief description of each.

- a. MidAmerican Soteria Avenue Substation (3455 SE Soteria Avenue): Electrical substation for Microsoft DSM 14 (SP-005140-2021)
- b. Microsoft DSM 14 (3655 SE Soteria Avenue): Preliminary Plat to subdivide into 2 lots, 1 street lot, and 1 outlot (PP-005139-2021)

3. Minor Modifications & Grading Plans

- a. Allied Construction (2825 SE 1st Street): Widen entrance drive from SE 1st Street (MML1-005130-2021)
- b. Covenant Cove (SE Corner of Bishop Drive and 98th Street): Change building elevations for DR Horton products (MML1-005146-2021)
- c. Palisade Building (4900 University Avenue): Demolition small building addition and patch connection (MML1-005152-2021)
- d. Dowling Catholic HS (1400 Buffalo Road): Replace softball bleachers and pave existing gravel areas around bleachers (MML2-005192-2021)
- e. Dowling Catholic HS (1400 Buffalo Road): Replace track bleachers and pave existing gravel areas around bleachers (MML2-005132-2021)
- f. Fountain Terrace Apartments (655 S 88th St): Initiate rough grading in anticipation of construction of apartments (GP-005107-2021)

4. Other Matters

Director Twedt provided a brief update regarding 301 and 304 5th Street, which will be proceeding to Plan & Zoning Commission on May 10, and City Council on May 17. She stated 301 5th takes its cues from the surrounding area and Staff doesn't have concern. Development Coordinator Schemmel summarized revisions to use of materials which is being discussed pertaining to 304 5th Street, trying to find something appropriate to the context without requiring historic. It will still be noticeably different due to the height and bulk, but the materials are being discussed to help it fit the area. Director Twedt noted that each block is different, and that this will look like what is approved for the 300 block, and it won't look like the 200 block. She added that staff feel confident it will fit the context. Council Member Hardman commented on the new building that looks like it has rust on it. Ms. Schemmel stated the City has received the most comments on the material which is weathered steel. Director Twedt stated Code does not prohibit that as a material. Council Member McKinney noted the discussion will continue this evening at the Workshop following the Council Meeting this evening.

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 AM. The next regularly scheduled Development and Planning City Council Subcommittee is May 17, 2021.

Lynne Twedt, Development Services Director

Jennifer Canaday, Recording Secretary