

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

Monday, June 19, 2023

Attending:

Council Member Matt McKinney
Council Member Greg Hudson
City Manager Tom Hadden
Deputy City Manager Jamie Letzring
Development Services Director Lynne Twedt
Development Coordinator Linda Schemmel

Principal Engineer Ben McAlister
Planner Brian Portz
Planner Kara Tragesser
Associate Planner Kate DeVine

Guests: None

The meeting of the Development and Planning City Council Subcommittee was called to order at 7:30 AM.

1. Jordan Ridge Update

Development Services Director Twedt briefly explained the Jordan Ridge development noting that platting is occurring in Parcel A on the southeast corner of the development. Caliber would like to do a townhome development in Parcel E of the PUD in the middle of the development. One of the townhome buildings is anticipated to be approximately 50 ft. from the S Jordan Creek Parkway once widened. Development Services Director Twedt noted that at the previous Subcommittee meeting when talking about the platting of the property to the south, it was questioned if this would affect the location of development and it was confirmed that flood plain and existing sewer will prevent development immediately adjacent to S Jordan Creek Parkway. At the last Council meeting, action was being taken related to Parcel D and again commented that no development would occur directly adjacent to S. Jordan Creek Parkway. Given these comments, staff is inquiring if the subcommittee is comfortable with one bi-attached townhome proposed to be located just off S Jordan Creek Parkway. The boundary line for the northernmost lot in Eldorado Estates is roughly 700 ft from the proposed townhome building. It was noted the townhome would be quite visible when looking/travelling north but not as much when travelling south. Staff noted that the developer is willing to reach out to individuals in the Eldorado Estates development if it is desired by the Council.

Council member McKinney commented that although he does not have any concerns regarding the proposed location for the bi-attached townhome adjacent to S. Jordan Creek Parkway on Parcel E, he did initially have concerns with the development of Parcel A and previously had discussions with the developer of that property.

Council member Hudson clarified the location of the townhome development in relation to the powerlines and confirmed where the wetlands and flood plain in the area are, which were pointed out by staff.

Staff noted that we have not reviewed a plat for the townhome parcel, however, would expect the developer to maintain as much of the trees as possible to enhance the development resulting in the main part of the townhome development not being too visible.

Direction: Council Members were supportive of the bi-attached townhome adjacent to S Jordan Creek Pkwy and encouraged the developer make Eldorado Estates aware.

2. Sidewalk Placement in Multi-Family Projects

In reviewing projects for multi-family developments, including the trend for detached and bi-attached townhomes on footprint lots, staff is running into issues with the compliance with code provisions noted on slide #5 regarding pedestrian pathways. Developers are putting the sidewalks immediately adjacent to the rolled curbs, with no protection for the pedestrians which staff cannot say meets the intent to have separated adequate physical separation. When staff requests that the sidewalks be moved back from the curb edge, we are told that they cannot do so for various reasons – no room, require a complete redesign, loss of units, project won't be feasible, etc. If the streets are private, sometimes a sidewalk is not constructed at all since there is nothing in the code that specifically says there needs to be a sidewalk along private streets. The High Point and Picket Fences development were provided as examples. Staff is suggesting code amendments to require sidewalks to be a minimum of 5' from the back of curb and then proposing to reduce the buffer to 25' and the perimeter setback from 35' to 25' to accommodate the additional land required by moving sidewalks back.

Council member McKinney questioned if staff would be changing the provisions for sidewalks not located inside a development. Department Director Twedt answered those are public sidewalks and bound by design standards for sidewalk placement and design, roughly 7 ft. from the curb edge.

Council member McKinney questioned if it is necessary to reduce the buffer. Department Director Twedt indicated that if you put sidewalks setback 5' on both sides of the street, you are collectively pushing the dwellings back 10' to be able to provide driveways long enough to park a vehicle without impeding the sidewalk.

Council member McKinney stated that while he understands this is for safety-related purposes, he does not want to change the code at the expense of reduction of the buffer. He noted he wants to make sure that there is an adequate amount of vegetation if the buffer is reduced and questioned whether the number of plants in the buffer could be increased. Development Services Director Twedt indicated that we could require more but at some point, it becomes a question of what really can fit when plants reach maturity. She noted that the number of trees maybe cannot, but the number of shrubs could or maybe it is a requirement for use of larger shrubs, those that at maturity are in the 8-15' range.

Council member Hudson stated that he agrees with Council member McKinney and requested clarification on the statement in the presentation that stated, "Get pushback and indication that they 'can't make it work' if they have to set the sidewalk back from the curb". Department Director Twedt clarified that the development is laid out with curbs immediately adjacent to the roadway. When staff requests physical separation for safety reasons, the developer pushes back on staff and suggest that moving the sidewalks off the curb edge is a major impact for the reasons mentioned earlier.

Development Services Director Twedt suggested that when sidewalks are placed on one side of the internal roadways Staff could drop the perimeter setback to 30' which would provide for the 5' and keep the buffer at 30' and allow them to overlap. If sidewalks are placed on both sides of the street, then a 10-foot adjustment would need to be provided, in which case then both the buffer and perimeter setback could be reduced to 25' with additional landscape vegetation requirements.

Council member Hudson asked if a future development came in with smaller buildings, would that be more affordable and there be more flexibility to build those, with potential to be less expensive.

Development Services Director Twedt noted that smaller buildings and ‘yards’ can make a development more affordable, but that is not really the case in these developments that staff is seeing as these are \$300,000 to \$600,000 townhomes. This development is geared towards those that want a detached home but less yard to maintain or an association to handle the maintenance. She noted that on tonight’s Council agenda is a code amendment for RS-5 and R-1 single family districts to reduce the setbacks under the idea of gaining more affordable homes.

City Manager Hadden asked if the sidewalk requirement would become more common with these types of developments. Development Services Director Twedt answered that the city will need to require the sidewalks as given a choice, developers will just not install any sidewalks, which is the case at the Courtyards at Kings Landing. She noted that developers prefer the private streets because of the lack of extra right-of-way width allowing them to construct the houses closer to the private streets and maximize the number of units.

Council member McKinney clarified if the city code could be written such that there needs to be a 30-foot setback for sidewalks on one side or a 10-foot reduction if sidewalks are on both sides. He added that if the developer is willing to invest in sidewalks on both sides, then maybe the City could be more flexible on what is required. If the sidewalk is only on one side, then the current buffer requirement should be maintained.

Development Services Director Twedt indicated that staff will figure out how to write code to be such.

Direction: With a 5-foot setback from the curb, Council Members were in support of reducing the perimeter setback to 30 feet if sidewalk on one side and reduce both the perimeter setback and buffer width to 25’ if sidewalks on both sides with more vegetation required.

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

- a. 8845 Lake Drive, Zoning Exception request to allow two building additions to be located within the side and rear yard setbacks. This request will be reviewed by the Board of Adjustment - VAR-006087-2023

Principal Engineer McAlister noted the proposed 2nd addition encroaches into the overland flowage easement, which prohibits structures from being built in the easement. The applicant will be made aware of this issue via the review comment letter and the Board of Adjustment will be informed the addition encroaches into the easement and is not acceptable.

- b. Picket Fence, Northeast corner of S. 88th Street and Mills Civic Parkway: Amend Silverwood PUD Ordinance for revised site layout and dwelling unit types - ZC-006089-2023

Council member Hudson stated that he has heard from residents who live in the single-family homes across the street (Coachlight) that have concerns with the proposed development being rentals. He noted his own concerns with having more dense development out of context to the existing single-family homes. Development Services Director Twedt responded that the proposed has a few more units than the original but has a better layout. The proposal is an allowed use that does meet the density requirements and the city does not have a means to control whether a project is rental or owner-occupied. The developer will be made aware of the concerns by the single-family residents to the north and reminded of agreement that the original layout orient the front of the homes to the street therefore a buffer increase on that side may be necessary.

Council member Hudson asked if there had been a zoning change on this property. Development Services Director Twedt responded that it was zoned office previously which was note likely due to market conditions. Previous inquiries have been for high-density apartment development so a change to medium density was welcomed.

Council member McKinney indicated agreement with being mindful of what was originally presented and would be in favor of additional buffering/vegetation along the north side of the development. He raised a question on whether the EMS access issue had been resolved. Director Twedt replied that the revised concept plan does resolve many of the access issues, but staff will work with the developer through the site plan process.

- c. Grand Experience, Northeast and southwest corner of S. Jordan Creek Parkway and Grand Avenue and south of the intersection of S. 60th Street and Grand Avenue: Three Plats of Surveys to consolidate existing parcels to allow for the transfer of ownership. POS-006092-2023/POS-006093-2023/POS-006-04-2023

It was noted that Plats of Survey are normally used to create a parcel but in this case was combining several existing parcels for transfer of ownership and ease of legal descriptions in the future. It was noted that the PUD amendment for this property was recently received but has not yet been reviewed by staff.

- d. 7152 Eldorado Point, Plat of Survey to swap portions of the property due to a landscape encroachment - POS-006078-2023

- e. Wihlm Property, 4105 Vividell Circle: Variance request to reduce rear yard setback from 15 feet to zero along Woodland Avenue to allow a 6' fence on the property line. This item will be reviewed by the Board of Adjustment - VAR-006080-2023

City Manager Hadden asked the reason for a 15-foot setback for the fence. Development Services Director Twedt responded the city does not want the tunnel effect of having fences flanking a roadway. It was noted that the applicant could install a 4-foot fence on the property line, as an alternative.

- f. Midwest Oilseeds, 4000 Turnberry Drive: Revised Plat of Survey to create a smaller parcel for the transfer of ownership to 4119 Plumwood Drive to rectify improvements constructed over the property line – POS-006011-2023

4. Other Matters

None.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 AM The next regularly scheduled Development and Planning City Council Subcommittee is July 17, 2023.

Lynne Twedt, Development Services Director

Michelle Riesenber, Recording Secretary