CITY OF WEST DES MOINES
DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
City Council Chambers

Monday, June 25, 2018

Attending:

Council Member John Mickelson
Council Member Renee Hardman
City Manager Tom Hadden
Deputy City Manager Jamie Letzring
City Attorney Dick Scieszinski
Fire Marshal Mike Whitsell
Principal Engineer Ben McAlister
Principal Traffic Engineer Eric Petersen

Development Services Director Lynne Twedt
Development Services Coordinator Linda Schemmel
Chief Building Official Rod VanGenderen
Planner Karen Marren
Planner Brian Portz
Planner Brad Munford
Planner Kara Tragesser
Mackenzie Locey, Intern
Andrew Sunderman, Intern

Guests: Item #1
Marc Ables – Simpson Law
Ed Arp, Civil Engineering
Bill Lowry, Applicant
Billie Brahn – Iowa State Bank
Don Brown – Coldwell Banker
Kim Dreher – AP Brokerage LLC

Guest: Item #2:
Sam Rogers, TWG Development, LLC

Development Services Director Lynne Twedt opened the meeting of the Development and Planning City Council Subcommittee at 8:00 am.

1. **Boone Farm (road network)**

Bill Lowry is interested in developing a piece of land in the northeast quadrant of the interchange of I-35 and Grand Avenue commonly referred to as Boone Farm. The West Des Moines Ultimate Street Circulation Map shows a minor collector street through the property connecting Grand Ridge Drive and Cherrywood Drive. At the time the surrounding land was developed, it was intended that those roads be connected as part of development of Boone Farm. Many different developers have looked at this property for its intended land use (Medium Density) and have been unsuccessful in making the prospectus work citing excessive infrastructure costs as the issue. A quarter mile of street and a culvert are necessary public improvements to make the required street connection.

Mr. Lowry has proposed Low Density Residential lots in this property and simply constructing a cul-de-sac at the end of both Cherrywood and Grand Ridge Drive. This proposal would eliminate the planned connection referred to above. While the land use is acceptable to staff, the lack of connectivity will be problematic for the City moving forward. The adjacent land uses are higher intensity, including 6 office buildings and a nursing home, that were developed with the intent of having the future connection to the west. Without an additional connection these properties will only have one way in and out in perpetuity. If this road is blocked for any reason (accident, fire, road construction) there will be no other way for 7 existing businesses and 8-10 new houses to get to or from their destinations. As an alternative, it appears there is sufficient spacing to connect Grand Ridge Drive south to Grand Avenue. However, this option would require approval and coordination with the Iowa DOT for access control and property acquisition.

Mr. Lowry was in attendance to discuss the matter. Staff are seeking input on whether Mr. Lowry's

proposal is something the committee would support

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Development Services Director Lynne Twedt provided an aerial view of the site being discussed, and asked the applicants to present their proposal. Mr. Ables explained the property being developed was left in trust to three charities who desire to sell the property rather than use it. Mr. Lowry listed the topographical challenges and noted that there is an intent to protect wetlands which was not in place when the original plan was created, and Mr. Arp pointed out that the construction of the interstate altered some right-of-way areas which decrease the usable space available to build on.

Principal Traffic Engineer Eric Petersen explained the original connectivity plan, and noted that expanded upon the disadvantages of not having a second access if it is not constructed. He said that a connection to Grand Avenue would meet Iowa DOT spacing criteria, but require Iowa DOT approval.

City Manager Hadden pointed out that this type of topographical situation will occur frequently as development continues to the south.

Fire Marshal Whitsell stated the emergency services concerns regarding access for equipment, the need for multiple response vehicles to be able to back out of an area, and restricted availability for looping fire hydrants for water pressure. He stated residential use rather than office/retail would be easier to provide services to in a cul de sac or dead end area. He preferred a connection to Grand Avenue for the second cul de sac. Ed Arp noted that the homes in this development would be large enough to be sprinklered, and Director Twedt informed the developer they would be required to be. Mr. Lowry indicated he understood.

Council Member Mickelson expressed concern regarding the neighbors to the project, and guest Billie Bahn assured him she had spoken with them, and they were supportive of single family rather than medium density use, and would prefer to see it developed rather than left to vandals. Council Member Mickelson noted that this area has functioned well with two dead end roads for 20 years, and could likely continue.

> *Direction – Council Members were supportive of this proposal and asked that the applicant continue to work with staff on the project details.*

2. TWG Development – SE corner of 88th & EP

TWG is an Indianapolis based company that is desiring to develop the southeast corner of EP True Pkwy & S 88th Street with a 54 unit, 3-story, mixed income apartment building (10% market rate, with the balance at 30%, 40%, and 60% AMI). The property would need to be rezoned from its current zoning of Neighborhood Commercial to High Density Residential. With changes in the Ashworth corridor and the anticipation of creating a larger Community Commercial retail area at the SE and NE corners of the 88th Street and Ashworth Rd intersection, staff was intending to change the subject property to Medium Density. Given the Council's recent indications that there is too many apartments and thus no additional ground should be zoned for multi-family, in combination with the Housing Needs study and affordable housing discussions, staff is looking for direction on whether to proceed with a change in zoning. Staff felt it was best for the developer to attend the Subcommittee meeting to explain the details of this proposed project.

Development Services Director Lynne Twedt provided an aerial of the location of this property, and later noted the medium density parcels adjacent to the east and west, as well as the high density areas to the north and south. She introduced Sam Rogers, representing The Whitsett Group (TWG), which has constructed affordable housing in 7-8 states. Mr. Rogers presented his request to have this site

rezoned for high density. He noted that the land value is high, and the construction quality needs to meet the 15 year ownership requirement. Given the lower lease rates, high density will be necessary to make the project financially feasible.

City Attorney Dick Sciezinski questioned whether the proposal had been approved by the Iowa Finance Authority yet, and Mr. Rogers responded that it was scheduled for review in November.

Deputy City Manager Letzring questioned whether that application would require an approval letter from City Council, and Mr. Rogers responded that forms completed by the City Manager would be sufficient.

Council Member Mickelson questioned why the developer chose this parcel rather than one already appropriately zoned. He stated his support of increasing affordable housing but noted Council's express intent a year ago to slow down high density development, and added that he prefers downzoning to upzoning. Mr. Rogers responded that it is difficult to find a high density location with smaller acreage in West Des Moines. Director Twedt provided a zoning map indicating that the available high density tracts are typically much larger and added that sellers aren't interested in subdividing when they are prepared to dispose of their property. It becomes the developer's responsibility to purchase more land than they need and hope to sell off the larger portion.

Council Member Hardman expressed support for bringing more affordable housing into West Des Moines, citing the recent Housing Needs Assessment as clearly indicating a need. She supported the proposal, stating she recognized the challenges and density issues but would like each opportunity examined with an approach of working on ways to get more Affordable Housing into the community.

Direction – Council Members were split regarding this proposal. Council Member Hardman was supportive of rezoning the parcel to enable more Affordable Housing in the community. Council Member Mickelson was not supportive of rezoning the parcel but encouraged the developer to consider seeking a different location which is already zoned high density.

3. **Upcoming Projects**
   a. 1521 Thornwood Rd: Board of Adjustment consideration to allow 14 chickens on Residential Estate zoned lot (PC-003945-2018)
   b. Whisper Point Park (9125 Bridgewood Blvd): Development of 3.21 acre Neighborhood Park consisting of shelter buildings, restroom, trails, play equipment, basketball court, open fields and off-street parking lot (SP-003917-2018)
   c. 501 Grand Oaks: Board of Adjustment consideration of a 15' variance of the required 20' side yard setback to accommodate a carriage house (VAR-003942-2018)
   d. Gateway Park: Amend Gateway PUD to allow fence in the S 50th Street landscape buffer (ZC-003948-2018)
4. **Minor Modifications & Grading Plans**
   a. SW Commerce Park (SW of IA 5 & Maffitt Road): Allow mass grading of site (GP-003946-2018)
   b. Valley View Park (301 88th St): Construct shelter, restrooms and sand volleyball court (MML1-003943-2018)
   c. Global Aviation (7760 Cascade Ave): Construction of gazebo (MML1-003944-2018)
   d. Blaze Pizza (6305 Mills Civic Pkwy, Ste 4100): Façade modification (MML1-003956-2018)
   e. 1112 Maple St: Install 6' fence on commercial property (MML1-003957-2018)
   f. Marriot Hotel Landscaping (1250 Jordan Creek Pkwy): Modify landscaping, concrete work and add bollards (MML1-003959-2018)

g. BCycle Bicycle Station (2500 Grand Ave): Install self-service bicycle kiosk in Raccoon River Park (MML1-003962-2018)
h. Smash Park (6625 Coachlight Dr): Install outdoor heaters in courtyard area (MML1-003963-2018)
i. Five Below (4100 University Ave): Façade modification (MML1-003966-2018)

5. Other Matters

a. City Manager Hadden informed the Committee that he approved a Right-of-Way permit allowing a bike rack in front of 232 6th Street, as this meets the intent the City has of becoming more walkable and bikable. Council Member Mickelson mentioned that he has had conversations with other developers recently who would like to do the same.
b. Comprehensive Plan Update RFP – Development Coordinator Linda Schemmel outlined a proposal to outsource the graphic design for the city Comp Plan to a firm which recently completed the Historic Valley Junction Master Plan.
c. Small Scale Manufacturing Grant Application – Development Coordinator Linda Schemmel indicated Staff is recommending applying for a grant to develop Small Scale Manufacturing within the community; the technical assistance provided will evaluate demand and market; and assist us to regulate them to help small businesses models fit areas other than industrial zoning.
d. Request to Work on Sundays - Principal Engineer Ben McAlister informed the Committee that Covenant Cove Townhomes builder has requested to work on Sundays as recent weather delayed their project. Council Members indicated support with restrictions on hours and City reserves right to shut down if too many complaints.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03am

Lynne Twedt, Development Services Director

Jennifer Canaday, Recording Secretary