

**MINUTES  
CITY OF AMES  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

Date: May 4, 2016	Debra Lee, Chairperson	2018
	*Matt Converse, Vice Chairperson	2018
Call to Order: 7:01 PM	*Carlton Basmajian	2017
	Rob Bowers	2018
Place: Ames City Hall Council Chambers	Julie Gould	2019
	Doug Ragaller	2019
Adjournment: 8:34 PM	Yvonne Wannemuehler	2018
	[*Absent]	

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CALL TO ORDER: Debra Lee, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION: (Bowers/Wannemuehler) to approve the agenda for the meeting of May 4, 2016

*MOTION PASSED: (4-0)*

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF April 20, 2016:

MOTION: (Ragaller/Wannemuehler) to approve the minutes of the meeting of April 20, 2016

*MOTION PASSED: (4-0)*

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PUBLIC FORUM: There were no public comments.

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**PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE PRELIMINARY PLAT FOR 125 & 130 WILDER AVENUE  
(SUNSET RIDGE SUBDIVISION, 7<sup>TH</sup> ADDITION)**

Kelly Diekmann, Planning and Housing Director, reported the City Council approved rezoning for this property in 2015 along with a Major Site Development Plan to allow for construction of 40 single-family attached homes. The conditional approval required platting to create individual residential lots. Hunziker Land Development LLC intends to develop the site with a mix of two- and four-unit buildings, each with a two-car detached garage, along with private streets and drives and visitor parking. Staff found the Preliminary Plat to be consistent with the approved Site Plan, and with Subdivision and Zoning regulations, and recommended approval.

Rob Bowers asked if construction was contingent upon Plat approval because he had observed that work had already begun on the site. Mr. Diekmann explained that building occupancy could not occur without a Final Plat. The developer could proceed with grading, utility location, and initial building construction with the approved Major Site Development Plan.

There were no applicant or public comments.

Yvonne Wannemuehler asked for clarification that the outcome with the proposed Plat is the creation of individual lots. Mr. Diekmann replied that each townhome unit will be on its own lot.

[Julie Gould arrived at 7:05 PM.]

Debra Lee requested further information about the private side streets. Mr. Diekmann indicated the homeowner's association would be responsible for their maintenance and long-term repair. Private streets are uncommon in Ames, he said, and are only allowed in certain zoning districts.

MOTION: (Ragaller/Bowers) to accept **Alternative #1**, which states: that the Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council **approve** the Preliminary Plat for Sunset Ridge Subdivision, 7<sup>th</sup> Addition.

*MOTION PASSED: (5-0)*

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**PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE LAND USE POLICY PLAN MAP AMENDMENT FOR 3115, 3413 & 3409 SOUTH DUFF AVENUE (BRICK TOWNE DEVELOPMENT)**

Case Planner Charlie Kuester reviewed the developer's request to change the Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) designation for the subject property from Highway-Oriented Commercial (HOC) to Residential High Density (RH) to allow for development of 700 apartment units to be marketed to the workforce population. Outreach meetings identified two main neighborhood concerns: storm water runoff and traffic impact from development. Mr. Kuester reviewed traffic study findings and potential improvements. Teagarden Study storm water issues were reviewed. The identified traffic and storm water solutions would likely require a development agreement to define the timing and scope of the developer's contributions to the project. Staff believed current vacant commercial land provides a 10-year supply of available commercial land that could absorb the loss of the less-than-40-acre subject site. Staff discussed RH Site Evaluation Matrix criteria and reviewed how the proposed development relates to several LUPP goals. At this time, staff does not have proposed layouts or architectural elevations to review. Mr. Kuester stated staff believes in maintaining a balance of housing types and views workforce-focused housing as an important component. Staff recommended approval of the proposed LUPP change to designate much of the subject site as RH while retaining HOC zoning in select areas.

Kelly Diekmann, Planning and Housing Director, noted recent correspondence with CyRide that clarified that enhancing bus service to the subject area would require a new route or a substantial adjustment to the current limited existing service/routing.

Debra Lee asked about building height allowances for RH zoning and airport height restrictions. Mr. Diekmann thought three stories would be most likely for the proposed development. While no specific project has been proposed, the developer's intent is clear. Mr. Kuester reviewed air space maps and indicated a three-story building would not impact restricted areas with a 90-100 foot clearance. Ms. Lee asked what could be built with that clearance. Mr. Diekmann said it could be essentially the maximum height of the RH zoning district, i.e., 100 feet/9 stories. Ms. Lee spoke about the implications RH zoning enables. At the LUPP stage, Mr. Diekmann said, the focus is on whether the site is appropriate or adaptable to the proposed use, not an examination of constraints or configuration, which would be discussed at the zoning stage.

Doug Ragaller asked if staff believed residential development on the subject property would ever integrate well with adjoining neighborhoods. Mr. Kuester thought residential development to the north was unlikely, and the area to the south would maintain commercial zoning. Mr. Diekmann spoke about integration as a LUPP objective and a goal for all development, and how integration may scale from one project to another. Mr. Ragaller was uncertain about what would integrate with the proposed development but acknowledged it would be large enough to

perhaps be its own neighborhood. Mr. Diekmann thought that would depend on the definition of a neighborhood, i.e., an apartment complex versus homes like the Southdale neighborhood.

Mr. Kuester reported that Luke Jensen, representing the Jensen Group, was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Jensen provided written comments to staff and the Commission outlining several reasons why the requested LUPP amendment should be supported.

Public comment opened at 7:39 PM.

Dinah Kerksieck, 621 Garden Road, supported an extended three lane cross section along Highway 69 to Garden Road or Ken Maril Road to address traffic volume and speed concerns. She encouraged further water studies to examine how to control water and silt runoff from any new development. Ms. Kerksieck also expressed concern for increasing the City's capacity for meeting lower income housing needs via affordable, workforce residential development in order to make it easier for people to afford to live in Ames.

Jennifer Sheeler, 203 Garden Road, has observed increased traffic volume during her 16 years as a Southdale resident. She expressed general opposition to high-density housing because an additional 1,000 people will worsen existing congestion problems. She described having to plan her life around traffic patterns. Annual flooding on her property is another issue she faces.

Juan Foegen, 316 Crystal Street, shared others' concerns about traffic and water problems. He asked if there could be a way to route some of the traffic from the proposed development to the north through adjoining properties as opposed to all of the traffic using South Duff Avenue.

Public comment closed at 7:48 PM.

The issue is the proposed LUPP change, Ms. Lee stated. Mr. Kuester added that the land use change would be the first of several steps that would come before the Commission. Ms. Lee commented on history showing that a LUPP change invites progression to the other steps.

Ms. Lee asked staff to compare the potential development on the subject site with the Copper Beech project. Mr. Diekmann indicated Copper Beech was 220-240 units with site acreage of 20 acres, about half the site size as the subject property. Ms. Lee asked if further development was possible in surrounding commercial properties. Mr. Diekmann said the subject property owner does not control those properties. Ms. Lee asked in the context of establishing a neighborhood feeling, i.e., would the developer have potential control over the type and timing of development on surrounding commercial properties to provide services to the residential development.

Mr. Ragaller viewed the proposed residential development as an opportunity to meet a growing need for a housing type in short supply. He believed this shortage would intensify with continued ISU Research Park expansion.

Ms. Lee noted lengthy discussion at a previous meeting and indicated she was comfortable with the proposed land use change from commercial to residential. She doubted the site would be used for commercial development any time soon and noted numerous other sites available for future commercial development. She asked staff to review the main options for the subject site. Mr. Diekmann said the choice is essentially to retain the most versatile designation, HOC, or to change the land use designation to RH if it is believed to be a suitable environment that can be accepted into public infrastructure systems. He stated that a case could be made either way for needing the land for one of those uses. At this time the proposed development is portrayed as a type of project that could meet community housing needs, he added, and the site is a B-level

commercial site, at best. Staff would not make this recommendation everywhere in the City. He emphasized staff examines apartment development case-by-case, rather than striving to develop a certain number of apartment units during a given time period.

Ms. Gould stated she assumed any development on the subject site cannot add to net storm water runoff—Mr. Kuester confirmed. According to Mr. Diekmann, with or without the potential project on the subject property, the City intends to address Southdale drainage problems with budgeted/planned projects identified in the Teagarden Study, which was a City effort. It appears the developer can accommodate identified detention needs and build the new development.

Ms. Gould asked if there are other recommended traffic improvements beyond the five options included in the staff report. Mr. Kuester indicated the traffic study includes a more extensive list of options than the highlights presented in the report. Mr. Diekmann spoke about improvements coming from a combination of City and developer efforts, as well as improvements that are included in the long range transportation plan, which is funding dependent.

Ms. Gould supported the proposed land use designation change from HOC to RH. In her view, a high-density residential development is more appropriate and attractive near an airport than a low density development. She thought the site was large enough to create a neighborhood if the developer chose to do so.

Ms. Lee expressed sympathy for residents affected by existing traffic problems and encouraged continued dialogue and work with the City Council to prioritize and address these concerns. She observed how the City has grown quickly and it seems like playing catch up with traffic issues.

MOTION: (Ragaller/Bowers) to accept **Alternative #1**, which states: that the Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend to the City Council that Highway Oriented Commercial can be retained for the frontage along South Duff Avenue north of the cemetery and designate the remainder as High Density Residential as shown in Attachment C.

*MOTION PASSED: (4-1); Opposed: Wannemuehler*

Mr. Diekmann stated this item would appear on the May 24, 2016 City Council agenda.

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## **PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE PRELIMINARY PLAT FOR 896 SOUTH 500<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE (CRANE FARM SUBDIVISION)**

Pinnacle Properties' requested Preliminary Plat includes 54 single-family home lots, three lots for apartment development, open space and storm water detention outlots, sidewalks/walking paths and trails, and five public streets, including extensions of Mortensen Road and Wilder Boulevard into the 52-acre site. Case Planner Justin Moore reported two primary subdivision design issues: 10 through lots with double frontage, and the length of Rowling Drive, which is at the maximum allowable block length for a subdivision. Staff found these issues acceptable due to existing site circumstances. Transportation issues for the site include selecting an optimal CyRide turnaround location, and negotiating a potential cost-sharing development agreement for future offsite road improvements along 500<sup>th</sup> Avenue and at the 500<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Lincoln Way intersection. Staff recommended conditional approval of the proposed Preliminary Plat.

Planning and Housing Director Kelly Diekmann indicated the preferred permanent solution for CyRide service would include a full extension of Mortensen Road through the site with a bus turnaround located on the northwest corner of the FS-RL portion of the site. This would displace

a portion of the open space planned for that outlot and would require either adjusting the depths of adjacent residential lots, or an allowance for the developer to make up for lost open space in the FS-RM portion of the development. The applicant would prefer the latter option.

Applicant, Keith Arneson, 4114 Cochrane Parkway, reviewed existing site conditions and the rationale for the planned layout, as well as various subdivision features. His company, Pinnacle Properties, would develop the single-family homes on the northern portion of the site.

Julie Gould asked why a sidewalk would be located in the northwest corner of the FS-RL portion of the site. Mr. Arneson said it would provide the required public access to the planned open space. He added that he was willing to accommodate a CyRide turnaround in that area. He reviewed the intended three-phase development plan for the site and noted the original plan was to build out Mortensen Road over a 2-4 year build period. The developer for the FS-RM portion of the project is likely willing to install the entire length of Mortensen Road, Mr. Arneson reported, provided CyRide and offsite improvements can be successfully negotiated.

There were no public comments.

Debra Lee was impressed overall with the planned connectivity on an awkwardly-shaped site.

MOTION: (Bowers/Gould) to accept **Alternative #1**, which states: that the Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council **approve** the Preliminary Plat for Crane Farm Subdivision, with the following conditions: (A) Provide for a bus turnaround with the phasing of the development of the apartment sites; and (B) Participate in the costs of the frontage improvements to 500<sup>th</sup> Avenue and offsite intersection improvements at Lincoln Way and 500<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

*MOTION PASSED: (5-0)*

Mr. Diekmann stated this item would appear on the May 24, 2016 City Council agenda.

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#### **ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION BYLAWS**

Julie Gould initiated discussion on changing the regular meeting start time from 7:00 PM to 6:00 or 6:30 PM. The Commission opted to retain the current 7:00 PM start time. Doug Ragaller asked if the Bylaws are compared with those from other planning and zoning commissions. Mr. Diekmann indicated bylaws for the City's various boards and commissions likely follow a similar format to one another. Ms. Gould asked if consent agenda items had been considered for the Commission. Mr. Diekmann indicated the Commission has a mix of items, including some that do not require public notice. Yvonne Wannemuehler expressed doubts about the Commission streamlining its deliberations by adopting a consent agenda.

MOTION: (Ragaller/Wannemuehler) to approve the existing Commission Bylaws.

*MOTION PASSED: (5-0)*

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COMMISSION COMMENTS: Debra Lee shared that she appreciated an opportunity to observe the University of Illinois campustown area during a recent trip.

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STAFF COMMENTS: Tentative agendas for upcoming Commission meetings were noted.

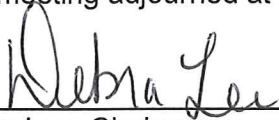
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MOTION TO ADJOURN:

MOTION: (Wannemuehler/Gould) to adjourn the meeting.

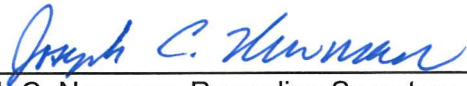
*MOTION PASSED: (5-0)*

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM.



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Debra Lee, Chairperson  
Planning & Zoning Commission



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Joseph C. Newman, Recording Secretary  
Department of Planning & Housing