

Community Development Department

222 Lewis Street
River Falls, WI 54022
715.425.0900
www.rfcity.org



MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
September 4, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers

Members Present: Scott Morrissette, Lisa Moody, Susan Reese, Bill Stuessel, Dan Toland, Michael Woolsey
Members Absent: Craig Hinzman
Staff Present: Brandy Howe, Sam Wessel, Amy Peterson
Others Present: Matt Hieb, Auth Consulting
Peter Gerrard, Gerrard Companies
Paul Gerrard, Gerrard Companies
Todd Erickson, Erickson Civil

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Morrissette, S/Moody – motion carried 6-0

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

CURRENT ITEMS

Consideration and recommendation of a rezoning request in the Sterling Ponds neighborhood

Howe reported that staff received a request from GMTZ, Inc. to rezone 2.5 acres of land in Sterling Ponds from Industrial to Traditional Neighborhood Development. Earlier in 2018 the developer entered into an agreement with the City where the developer would purchase the land to build the next phases of Sterling Ponds. Approximately 12 single family lots will be located in the area to be rezoned with an additional 25 lots to come online in a second phase. The houses are expected to be consistent in size, character, and quality to those already built in Sterling Ponds. The proposed rezoning and development is consistent with the density and land use planned in the Comprehensive Plan, zoning ordinance, preliminary plat for Sterling Ponds, and the purchase agreement between the City and the developer. The rezoning was posted on the site and letters were mailed to property owners within 300 feet. Staff has received no inquiries or comments from the public on this project. Staff therefore recommends the Plan Commission forward the rezoning request to the City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Reese asked whether there will still be a buffer between the proposed housing and the corporate park to the west. Howe confirmed that a landscape berm has already been constructed for this purpose and street trees will be required as well, as is indicated in the subdivision ordinance.

Morrissette made a motion to approve resolution PC 2018-05 recommending an amendment to the Official Zoning Map of the City of River Falls for the Sterling Ponds neighborhood.

M/Morrisette, S/Moody – motion carried 6-0

Public Hearing and recommendation on a general development plan (GDP) for the DeSanctis Park Villas

Howe reported that staff received a request from Gerrard Companies for general development plan approval for DeSanctis Park Villas. The GDP covers 7.08 acres that is currently zoned R1 Single Family Low Density Residential. The proposal includes 22 twin homes, realignment of Dry Run Road, a new access road, trail connections, parking for DeSanctis Park and Glover School, and new storm water ponds. The City entered into an agreement where the developer would purchase the land to establish a PUD for housing and where the City would provide land for road right-of-way, use of the existing storm water pond as a regional facility, and have the option to contribute \$75,000 for the proposed parking lot and sewer/water extension to Glover School. Howe reported that staff reviewed the GDP against the Comprehensive Plan, Housing Needs Analysis, and a 2000 conceptual road layout for DeSanctis Park and found the project to be generally consistent with these documents. Howe noted areas of the proposal where the GDP departs from the zoning and subdivision standards and staff recommendations in the draft resolution on how to address the departures, where warranted.

The Mayor opened the public hearing. Peter Gerrard addressed the Commission and provided some history on his company and projects they have completed in River Falls. Paul Gerrard explained that Buddy Lucero, Community Development Director, and Scot Simpson, City Administrator, invited the Gerrard brothers to work on the DeSanctis project. He indicated that the City's requirement to provide access onto a street other than Division resulted in the density for this project. He indicated that they will work with staff to meet requirements outlined by planning and engineering staff.

Benjamin Fuchs, 2529 Powell Avenue, expressed his concerns for bicycle and pedestrian safety. He suggests that a sidewalk be added to the south side of the development. He added that it would be nice to add conifers or other landscaping for screening. He asked if the cul-de-sac would be large enough for buses to turn around in and he asked if the parking lot proposed will be large enough to accommodate events or activities at Glover School given the lack of available on-street parking in the vicinity.

Barry Butenhoff, 18 Dry Run Road, expressed concerns about the density of the proposed development from an aesthetics point of view and the traffic that would be created from 44 dwelling units. He also expressed concerns that the well and septic systems in his area might be impacted.

Deb Freeman, 16 Dry Run Road, asked if the proposed development is a good steward of the land. She asked if there have been any studies on the potential impact on well and septic systems in his area. She also noted that it will be important to consider safety for future school students that will need to walk to school.

Patricia LaRue, 489 Marcella Court, expressed her support for the project as it will provide housing for first time home buyers and empty nesters who have sought out River Falls because of the community's recreation and cultural amenities.

Mark Spafford, 1305 W Division, thanked the City for adjusting the development proposal for DeSanctis Park from what had previously come before the City in 2017. He noted that the density for the current proposal seems extreme and he asked what the density would have been had the developer not been required to pay for an access road. He asked for more information about the width of the sidewalk along Division Street that would connect the existing sidewalk to the trail in the development. He asked if the water line for the development would be tied in to the water line that serves his house.

The Mayor closed the public hearing and asked the Commission for a motion.

Morrisette made a motion to approve resolution PC 2018-06 to recommend Council approval for a general development plan for DeSanctis Park Villas.

Morrisette asked about the price point for the units and if there is an intended use for Outlot 1. Paul Gerrard responded that they'll likely be in the \$240k-\$300k range; he also noted there is no use for the outlot at this time and it will be greenspace. Woolsey commented that the proposed development may lock in DeSanctis Park so that it is no longer viewed by the rest of the community as a regional park. Morrisette noted that he sees the development as opening up the park in that it provides the necessary parking to make the park accessible and water and sewer to make Glover School a viable community center. Reese commented that the strip of land proposed for the development was never a part of the park and that it is time to share the park with other people. Reese asked if this development would have a homeowner's association. Paul Gerrard indicated that they are establishing that at this time. Reese suggested that the fronts of the houses should be oriented to the greenspace with the garage side being the back of the house. This type of setup provides more of a community feeling and unity in the neighborhood. She asked if the developer would be willing to consider this. Todd Erickson, civil engineer for the project, indicated that Reese's idea is good and would lend a great feel for the community. Reese asked for clarification on whether any of the units would be built on slabs. Todd Erickson responded that from an engineering perspective, he's recommending that they all have basements. Reese noted that she was concerned that they would end up on slabs and might necessitate another storm shelter in a city park, which she would like to avoid, if possible. Reese asked if it is possible to avoid taking park space for ponding. Todd Erickson indicated that he will need to have discussions with the City Engineer to determine the best approach for storm water to the project; the west ponding system can probably be eliminated, and the eastern pond might be reconfigured. Todd Erickson also addressed some of the questions posed by those who commented during the public hearing. He noted that there will be landscaping added to the site, the cul-de-sac will be large enough for busses, there will be no impact on groundwater or well and septic systems, and that the utilities will connect with those to the east.

M/ Morrisette, S/Reese – motion carried 6-0

UPDATES AND INFORMATION

Development Review Update

Peterson updated that all of the development review projects that have been reviewed by staff so far have been approved, with the last one being Culver's. She also noted that staff met with the School District recently to talk about their upcoming projects.

Official Map update timeline

Peterson reported that the next step in the process is a City Council referral of the official map update project to the Plan Commission, which is an ordinance requirement. This will occur at the September 25th Council meeting. The Plan Commission will review the draft map at the October 2nd meeting and will refer back to City Council in November.

AJOURNMENT

Reese made a motion to adjourn at 7:39 p.m.

M/ Reese, S/Morrisette – motion carried 6-0

Respectfully submitted,



Brandy Howe, AICP, Senior Planner