

**Community Development Department**

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



**MINUTES  
PLAN COMMISSION  
SEPTEMBER 7, 2021, AT 6:30 P.M.  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**Members Present:** Dan Toland, Lisa Moody, Patricia LaRue, Diane Odeen, Chris Holtkamp, Rebecca Prendergast  
**Staff Present:** Amy Peterson, Crystal Raleigh, Angie Bond, Sam Burns, Kendra Ellner  
**Others Present:** Matt Hieb, Susan Reese

**CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

M/Holtkamp, S/Odeen to approve minutes. Motion carried 6-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

**Resolution approving Highview Meadows 6<sup>th</sup> Addition Final Plat**

City Engineer Crystal Raleigh provided a brief presentation on the Highview Meadows 6<sup>th</sup> Addition final plat.

Raleigh stated the request is to approve the final plat for Highview Meadows 6<sup>th</sup> Addition. The applicant is Kings Highway and the location is east of River Falls Golf Club and west of Royal Oaks Subdivision. There are 35 single family lots with approximately 2.2 dwelling units per acre. Staff reviewed the plat and it is consistent with codes and standards of preliminary plat, comprehensive plan, official map, zoning map, developers agreements, and utility and streets. Six of the lots join to steep slopes which are lots with 20% slope or greater. Staff met with developer and builders to come up with additional option if an infiltration basin is not desired due to the soil. The solution is roof gutters will be allowed to run in front of the house and drain to the street.

Raleigh’s recommendation is to forward the final plat for Highview Meadows 6<sup>th</sup> Addition to City Council for approval with favorable vote subject to the following contingencies: development agreement is met, irrevocable letter of credit is submitted, and state verification received.

Holtkamp asked if draining to the front of the lot, will current stormwater facilities handle that additional drainage. Raleigh stated it is adequate. LaRue asked if this will be a future requirement for

other phases. Raleigh answered it would be a standard requirement, to have infiltration basin installed or drain to the front of the lot as options for steep slope lots.

M/Odeen, S/Moody to approve the resolution for Highview Meadows 6<sup>th</sup> Addition final plat.

Motion carried 6-0.

### **Resolution affirming the interpretation of permitted uses in the C- Conservancy zoning district**

Ellner presented background on this item which is being considered to allow for an 18-hole disc golf course in Sterling Ponds Park.

The project will function similarly to the Kinni Off-Road Cyclists (KORC) agreement in Whitetail Ridge Corporate Park and the proposal is consistent with the Sterling Ponds Park Plan and conservancy zoning. The parcel will be mostly undeveloped, wooded open space, volunteer-built facilities, additional public usage of trails for other outdoor recreational activities. In 1994 Hoffman Park east was acquired using Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Urban Green Space funding (WDNR UGS), the funding was later transferred to Sterling Ponds. Current WDNR UGS program restricts public outdoor recreation though it was determined that original grant rules transfer granting public outdoor recreational use including disc golf.

The twelve-acre parcel is zoned for Conservancy. The purpose of Conservancy zoning district is to protect and preserve valuable natural resources and open spaces. Conservancy zone does not define nature- based recreation or list biking, hiking, disc golf, or outdoor sports however the disc golf proposal is comparable to the mountain bike trails in Whitetail Ridge Corporate Park which is also zoned Conservancy. This proposal is to clarify the zoning consistency.

In 2019 the City and KORC entered into a MOU to formalize a relationship and responsibility of each party to continue the use of mountain bike trails. The same would occur with the River Falls Disc Golf Club. The proposed course will allow for public use of trails and it is to be noted that the RF Disc Golf Club has already completed extensive invasive species removal on out lots improving the ecological health of the property which is in line with Conservancy zoning.

Staff analysis concludes that for the past two decades the City and KORC have worked together to construct, maintain, and upgrade the mountain biking course in the Conservancy district in the Whitetail Ridge Corporate Park. Similarly to mountain biking, disc golf is a form of recreation using rugged terrain which is found in Conservancy districts. Staff concurs that allowing these uses in out lots are compatible with Conservancy zoning. If the Plan Commission approves this resolution it will go to City Council for consideration of the golf course on the Sterling Hill site and a MOU will be enacted between the City and the River Falls Disc Golf Club. Staff recommends the approval of the resolution affirming the interpretation of the permitted uses in the C-Conservancy Zoning District.

M/LaRue, S/Hofland recommends the approval of the resolution affirming the interpretation of the permitted uses in the C-Conservancy Zoning District. LaRue noted that the River Falls Disc Golf Club has done extensive work on their own time and with their own money clearing buckthorn and have put forth a lot of effort. Hofland asked what type of buildings or structures would be allowed on the site. Ellner mentioned benches or restroom are a possibility. Peterson stated that a future parking facility is possible and for now it will be the hole and tees installed. Hoffman Park has nine holes and is considered a starter course, the Sterling Hills will have 18 holes and is considered more challenging. Peterson stated this process will be a progression similar to the agreement with KORC. LaRue mentioned she hopes the course will bring business to the downtown area. Holtkamp commented

about the maintenance of the heavily traveled areas of the course usually around the tees and hopes that is maintained. Motion carried 6-0.

## **REPORTS/DIALOGUE**

### **Special Use Permits Discussion**

Peterson presented her discussion on the Special Use Permits Process.

City Council passed special use permit (SUP) ordinance modification on June 8, 2021 but sent it to Plan Commission for further discussion regarding the public process portion of special use permits. The City Council discussion included whether the notification distance should be widened from the current 300 feet, whether a sign should be placed on the property notifying the public of the special use permit, and whether or not a public informational meeting should occur to explain the SUP, the SUP process and allow the public to comment. Peterson reviewed the current process for SUP which includes; application and fee, public hearing, notification, review by Plan Commission, approval or denial, and appeal process. Peterson summarized the outcome of this discussion could include deeming the current process is sufficient, modify the ordinance regarding the to public process, developing public participation policy, or other recommendations.

Odeen commented the current policy gives adequate notice and opportunity for the public to participate. Concerns could be addressed with adding a sign on the property of the proposed SUP to give the public more notice about the SUP.

LaRue asked what the informal public meeting would entail if added to the process. Peterson clarified it would be a meeting with the applicant or developer in attendance and allow for the public to attend to learn about the SUP Process. It was discussed it would add transparency and only drawback may be staff time.

Odeen added this would be an additional public meeting as there is already one in the current process.

Mayor Toland commented that in his experience no one has attended the public meetings for the few SUP's he has experienced and believes there is more than enough information provided to the public in the current process.

Hofland asked for clarification on the sign notification. Peterson stated it would be a sign on the proposed property of the SUP with contact information for additional information. This could benefit those outside the 300 ft notification area who do not get the notification letter.

The Mayor asked if this is only a discussion. Peterson clarified if the Plan Commission recommends a sign as part of the process, the ordinance needs to be modified so it will go back to City Council.

It was concluded by Peterson that Plan Commission wants to require the sign on the property as part of the process and modify the ordinance to reflect that addition.

### **Director's Report**

Peterson provided a brief director's report of departmental activities. She thanked Plan Commission for feedback from the recent joint workshop to determine a consulting firm for the upcoming planning process. Staff will be meeting with a consulting firm about their engagement process and other aspects of their proposal. City Council approved the 700 S Main project A second joint review meeting will be on Sept. 13 and if approved, construction will begin. July year to date building permits for 2021 are 193

compared to 189 in 2020. There are 100 current vacant lots. Raleigh talked about the GIS mapping moving to a cloud-based server for better accessibility. It should be complete by end of 2021. Peterson named the new staff that has joined the Community Development Department. They include Kendra Ellner and Sam Burns, both planners and Emily Shively, city planner. Peterson reminded everyone of the Park Board meeting on Sept. 15 at 5:15 p.m. which will include a presentation by Lynn Huiskamp, a public health official. The topic is the building environment and how that integrates with public health. Prendergast asked what the Customer Relations Management tool is. Peterson stated Schreiner is looking at options for software with firms that provide the interface.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The Mayor made a motion to adjourn at 7:11 p.m. S/LaRue; motion carried 6-0

Respectfully submitted,

Angie Bond, community development assistant