

GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 26, 2005 MINUTES
7:00 p.m. to 8:13 p.m.

The regularly scheduled Planning Commission hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Paul Dibble. The public hearing was held in the City Hall Auditorium.

In attendance, representing the City Planning Commission, were Paul Dibble (Chairman), Roland Cole, Lynn Pavelka-Zarkesh, William Putnam, Bill Pitts, John Redifer, and Pat Carlow (2nd Alternate). Thomas Lowrey was absent.

In attendance, representing the City's Community Development Department, were Kathy Portner (Planning Manager), Pat Cecil (Development Services Supervisor), Lori Bowers (Senior Planner), Ronnie Edwards (Associate Planner), and Scott Peterson (Associate Planner).

Also present were Jamie Kreiling (Asst. City Attorney), and Rick Dorris and Eric Hahn (Development Engineers).

Terri Troutner was present to record the minutes.

There were approximately 26 interested citizens present during the course of the hearing.

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS, PRESENTATIONS AND/OR VISITORS

There were no announcements, presentations and/or visitors.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Available for consideration were the minutes from the March 22 and March 31, 2005 public hearings.

MOTION: (Commissioner Cole) "Mr. Chairman, I move for approval of the minutes [of March 22, 2005] as printed."

Commissioner Putnam seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0, with Commissioners Redifer and Pitts abstaining.

MOTION: (Commissioner Cole) "Mr. Chairman, I move for approval of the minutes [of March 31, 2005] as printed."

Commissioner Pavelka-Zarkesh seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0, with Commissioners Putnam and Pitts abstaining.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

Available for consideration were items:

1. GPA-2005-060 (Zone of Annexation - Burkey Park Annexation)
2. ANX-2005-036 (Zone of Annexation - Anson Annexation)
3. VE-2005-025 (Easement Vacation - Grand Cascade Way Easement)
4. FPP-2004-243 (Final Plat/Plan and Easement Vacation - Independence Ranch Filings 12 & 13)
5. FP-2004-062 (Final Plat - 2620 G Road Subdivision, Phase II)
6. PP-2005-003 (Preliminary Plat - Unawweep Heights, Filing #3)

7. ANX-2004-305 (Zone of Annexation - Irwin/Riverfront Annexation)
8. CUP-2004-136 (Conditional Use Permit - Marriott Hotels)

Chairman Dibble briefly explained the nature of the Consent Agenda and invited the public, planning commissioners, and staff to speak up if they wanted one or more of the items pulled for additional discussion. No objections were received from the audience, planning commissioners, or staff on any of the items.

MOTION: (Commissioner Cole) "Mr. Chairman, I move for approval of the Consent Calendar as presented."

Commissioner Pitts seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

IV. FULL HEARING

PP-2005-014 PRELIMINARY PLAN – SHADOW RUN AT THE RIDGES

A request for approval of the Preliminary Plan to develop 34 multi-family units on 4.99 acres in a PD (Planned Development) zone district.

Petitioner: Mike Stubbs, Dynamic Investments

Location: East Lakeridge Road

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

Paul Shoukas, representing the petitioner, gave a PowerPoint presentation containing the following slides: 1) site location map; 2) existing conditions; 3) density comparison: entitled versus submitted; 4) photos of surrounding multi-family dwelling units; 5) architectural elevations; 6) site plan; 7) entry acquisition and traffic patterns; 8) elevation cross-sections; 9) process: 3-D modeling; 10) process: view sheds; and 11) process: overall community.

Mr. Shoukas overviewed the request and said that the Ridges development had approximately 664 platted lots with an overall density of 1.8 du/acre. Shadow Run was not to exceed 70 du/acre without prior approval from the Ridges Architectural Codes and Covenants ordinance; however, due to a density reallocation resulting from the Rana Road replats and Eagle Crest development, Shadow Run now had an approved overall density of 7.5 du/acre, or 37 units. A photo of the site and a graphic indicating slope directions and drainage patterns were shown. The project, he said, represented infill development and would serve to transition the higher density development across Ridges Boulevard to single-family development situated to the east. Mr. Shoukas felt that the development represented "smart growth" while avoiding sprawl. The request included development of only 34 units. Photos of existing single- and multi-family developments were presented. The Shadow Run development would incorporate attractive designing with product functionality. Ranch-styled units would not exceed 20 feet in height; two-story units would be limited to just 26 feet in height from finished grade. Finished homes would be approximately 2,200 to 2,600 square feet in size and incorporate energy-efficient materials. All homes, with the exception of one four-plex would have the option of a walk-out finished basement. A homeowners association (HOA) would be created to maintain building exteriors and to handle specific utilities such as trash service, snow removal, etc. Landscaping and irrigation would be installed prior to homeowner closing and would be maintained by the HOA. All units would have two-car garages and accommodate an additional two cars in off-street parking.

Mr. Shoukas referenced the project's site plan and pointed out the proposed two access locations: a full movement access point off of East Lakeridge Drive and a right-in, right-out access point off of Ridges Boulevard. The East Lakeridge Drive entrance would feature a landscaped median, bollards, and sign

walls. Internal streets were designed to include a 20-foot pavement width to minimize pavement and runoff while increasing the amount of available greenspace. If approved as private streets, maintenance would be provided by the HOA. A pedestrian path had been proposed to the north of the site (shown on the site plan), which would provide access to a nearby bus shelter off of Plateau Drive. Landscaping, to include colorful, 4-season vegetation would be planted along rights-of-way and common areas. A 14-foot landscape buffer existed between the proposed loop road and adjacent property to ensure adequate privacy between neighbors.

Mr. Shoukas presented a cross-section slide denoting proposed cut and fill elevations and proposed and existing topographic grades on single-loaded and double-loaded roads. Single-loaded roads, he said, were more advantageous for steeper topographies. They would require less grading, reduce infrastructure impacts, allow larger tree lawns, and better facilitate sidewalks. The construction of single-loaded roads would also result in larger back yards and little or no need for retaining walls. As part of the process, 3-D modeling had been used to maximize view sheds while reducing the number and scale of retaining walls. Neighbors had been contacted and an informal neighborhood meeting had been held to solicit input.

STAFF'S PRESENTATION

Lori Bowers gave a PowerPoint presentation containing the following slides: 1) site location map; 2) aerial photo map; 3) Future Land Use Map; 4) Existing City and County Zoning Map; 5) Preliminary Plan; and 6) photos of the site and surrounding neighborhood. She briefly synopsisized the history of the Ridges and said that development of the proposed 34 units would result in a density of 6.8 du/acre. Since density was calculated as gross density for the entire development, the Ridges overall density of 4 units/acre was consistent with Growth Plan recommendations. The proposed access to Lakeridge Drive would cross City-owned open space. Negotiations were underway to formalize the sale of the crossing. Final approval on privatizing the development's internal streets would rest with City Council but a recommendation was sought from the Planning Commission.

Ms. Bowers outlined the Code's Planned Development criteria and concluded that the request met or could meet all established criteria. The Ridges' underlying RMF-8 zone permitted maximum building heights of up to 35 feet. The petitioner indicated that ranch-style and two-story homes would not exceed 20 feet and 26 feet in height, respectively, from finished grade. To buffer those lots backing up to Ridges Boulevard, the petitioner had agreed to provide a meandering tract of landscaped open space (Tract A), varying in width from 40 feet to as narrow as 9.19 feet. The open space would be maintained by the development's HOA. The private drive proposed on the southeastern side of the irregularly-shaped parcel would create double frontage lots for those lots facing Plateau Drive. Since it would be the backsides of building that would face the private drive, staff regarded the private drive as more of an alleyway than a street. Given that this project was being proposed for a Planned Development Zone, the deviation from straight-zone fencing and screening requirements along the northwestern boundary of the site was viewed as inconsequential.

The amenities recognized with the proposed Planned Development project included the provision of sidewalks throughout the development and a changed paving pattern for a pedestrian crossing to Lakeridge Drive. Approximately 44 percent of the project would be retained as open space. The amount of available parking exceeded Code requirements, and phasing schedules were noted.

Having concluded that the request met both Code criteria and Growth Plan recommendations, staff recommended approval of the Preliminary Plan and the proposed private streets.

QUESTIONS

Commissioner Cole asked if the Fire Department had reviewed and approved the proposed street configuration, to which Ms. Bowers responded affirmatively.

Jamie Kreiling stated for the record that while the developer had lodged an objection to imposed parks and open space fees, which had not been waived, that was not an issue for the Planning Commission, nor should it have any bearing on a decision for the current request.

Chairman Dibble referenced the crossing mentioned previously by staff and asked for additional clarification. Ms. Bowers noted the location of a portion of City-owned land that the developer required for development of the Lakeridge Drive entrance. That intersection would be developed for full turning movements of vehicular traffic.

Chairman Dibble asked for additional clarification on the TEDS manual's requirements for sidewalks and a 20-foot street pavement width. Eric Hahn explained that the TEDS manual required a minimum width of 20 feet for any private street, measured from curb face to curb face. With private streets, sidewalks were not necessarily required on both sides of the street. However, the developer intended to construct sidewalks on one side of the street. He added that the "Y" configuration near proposed units 30 and 31 represented a dead-end (hammerhead) turnaround to accommodate fire and emergency vehicle turning movements. It was not a parking area. In fact, no on-street parking would be allowed on any portion of the private streets, with the exception of proposed parking pods (shown).

Chairman Dibble wondered if there would be any need for traffic calming at the Ridges Boulevard entrance. Mr. Hahn said that the City's transportation engineer had determined that nothing more than a stop sign would be necessary.

Commissioner Pitts asked if a decel lane wouldn't provide a safer turning environment for vehicles at the Ridges Boulevard intersection, to which Mr. Hahn replied negatively, adding that traffic volumes didn't warrant construction of a decel lane. Trip count information was provided, which supported that conclusion.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

FOR:

There were no comments for the request.

AGAINST:

Brian Langfitt (365 Plateau Drive, Grand Junction) said that while most of his questions had been answered, he'd thought he'd heard the developer to say at neighborhood meetings that building heights of two-story units would be 36 feet, a difference of 10 feet from what had been presented in previous testimony. Also, he understood that the referenced City-owned open space had actually been given to the City. If that were the case, shouldn't citizens decide whether and when to give it to a developer? He suggested the matter be put to a vote of the local citizenry. He was also unclear on why the City would regard the driveways of double frontaged lots as alleyways.

Elaine Pilz (2387 W. Plateau Court, Grand Junction) expressed concerns over what she perceived to be the City's "giving away" of publicly owned open space and the loss of her views of the National Monument. The open space issue, she said, should be put to a vote, and building heights should be minimized to protect her view corridor. She was also concerned over the noise that additional traffic from 34 homes would bring, and she thought that a traffic light was probably warranted at the Lakeridge Drive entrance. Was there something that citizens could do to prevent the City from "giving away" the open space at the Lakeside Drive intersection?

Martin Wiesiolek (2385 Ridge Circle Drive, Grand Junction) wondered what the City could or would do to reduce the increased noise brought about by so much traffic and development of the Ridges. And what plans did the developer have to monitor and prevent speeding? Wouldn't this be impossible if streets were privatized? Mr. Wiesiolek expressed concern over the diminishing quality of life in the Ridges as a result of so much development and associated traffic. It seemed the City was less interested in addressing the problems associated with more traffic than it was in finding ways to accommodate it.

Lyn Sherman (2388 W. Plateau Court, Grand Junction) said that the developer's proposed private streets would be constructed very close to her back yard fence. She understood that parking spaces were being provided, but what assurances were there that no on-street parking would occur? Who would police parking and traffic if the streets were privatized? If the streets were out of City control, would the City's law enforcement officials even be permitted to do any enforcement in that area? And if on-street parking did become a problem, how would this affect emergency vehicle access? This project, she felt, would add a lot of extra density and exacerbate the traffic problems already existing in the Ridges. The traffic generated by the golf course, she said, was substantial. She agreed that the quality of life previously found in the Ridges was going downhill rapidly.

QUESTIONS

Chairman Dibble asked Ms. Kreiling to address the parking enforcement issue. Ms. Kreiling said that it would depend on the developer's restrictions of on-street parking. Enforcement of restrictions could be more a Code enforcement versus a law enforcement issue.

Mr. Hahn said that a condition of approval for privatizing streets is the developer's recording of an agreement to allow the City perpetual access. Both the City and Fire Department would also require the developer to post No Parking signs along private streets. The 20-foot pavement width would still be sufficient to allow access of emergency vehicles in the event that cars parked along one side of the street.

PETITIONER'S REBUTTAL

Mr. Shoukas said that building heights had been a primary issue raised at the neighborhood meeting. Heights of buildings, he reiterated, would be no more than 20 feet for ranch-style units and approximately 26 feet 4 ¾ inches for two-story units. With regard to the protection of view corridors, the single-load cut and fill work outlined previously would result in it being difficult to even see the road from Ms. Pilz's home. The pedestrian only access (location noted) intended to reduce vehicular traffic impacts to Plateau Drive. The low traffic counts expected from the project didn't even trigger the need for a traffic study. The development, he said, would cater to empty nesters who wanted a maintenance-free lifestyle. That would likely result in more senior buyers who didn't do a whole lot of driving. Thus, he felt that traffic impacts would be minimal.

With regard to on-street parking and law enforcement issues, he recalled HOA's and homeowners in other areas who vigorously policed on-street parking. No Parking and speed limit signs of 15 mph would be posted. He'd actively engaged in discussions with Fire Department officials to ensure that safety would not be compromised. He didn't think that there would be the level of problems anticipated by neighboring residents.

QUESTIONS

Commissioner Carlow asked for verification that the proposed density would actually be less than what would have been permitted. Mr. Shoukas reiterated that of the 37 units they could have built, only 34 units had been proposed.

Commissioner Cole wondered what the status of negotiations were with the City regarding the crossing area. Ms. Kreiling said that a presentation had been made at a City Council workshop. City Council had directed staff to look into the matter further to determine if the crossing was really necessary and to bring findings back to City Council for review. City Council would make the final determination on any sale of the land.

Commissioner Cole asked if this sale would set a precedent. Ms. Kreiling replied negatively, adding that each situation was considered individually.

Chairman Dibble wondered why the 40-foot-wide pedestrian and utility easement hadn't been proposed as an interconnecting street to Plateau Drive. Mr. Shoukas noted the presence of a bus shelter within the easement and said that by acquiring the easement for pedestrian access, traffic impacts to the neighboring Plateau Drive community would be reduced while pedestrian interconnectivity would still be facilitated.

Chairman Dibble asked if members of the Ridges Architectural Control Committee had been present at the developer's neighborhood meeting. Mr. Shoukas said that no official meeting had been required; however, he'd opted to host one for surrounding residents, those whom would most likely be affected by the proposed development.

Chairman Dibble said he hoped the developer would consider measures to ensure, as much as possible, that traffic traveled in the correct direction at the right-in, right-out intersection.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Cole remarked that the developer seemed to have gone to extensive measures to mitigate concerns. Given that the request met Code requirements and Growth Plan recommendations, he could see no reason not to support staff's recommendation of approval for the plan and for the privatization of streets.

Commissioner Pitts observed that the only real outstanding issue was with regard to the parks and open space fees, and that issue wasn't within the purview of the Planning Commission. The request met the Ridges ODP and City criteria, and he had no problem supporting it.

Commissioners Redifer and Carlow agreed.

Chairman Dibble said that he'd reviewed the Ridges covenants and other legal documents, and he'd visited the site. He felt that the project represented good infill. Since it met City regulations and policies, he also felt he could lend his support.

MOTION: (Commissioner Cole) "Mr. Chairman, on item PP-2004-046, the request for approval of the Shadow Run at the Ridges Planned Development Plan, I move that the Planning Commission recommend conditional approval to the City Council of the Planned Development Plan, including the private streets proposed within the subdivision, with the findings of fact and conclusions as listed in the staff report. The conditions of approval include City Council's authorization of the private streets and the applicant obtaining the required land necessary from the City for the access to Lakeridge Drive."

Commissioner Pitts seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

With no further business to discuss, the public hearing was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.