

**GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 24, 2004 MINUTES
7:00 P.M. to 8:40 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 Dr. Paul Dibble (Chairman), Roland Cole, John Evans, William Putnam, John Redifer and Travis Cox.

In attendance, representing the City's Community Development Department, were Bob Blanchard (Community Development Director), Pat Cecil (Development Services Supervisor), Ronnie Edwards (Associate Planner), Lori Bowers (Senior Planner), Lisa Cox (Senior Planner) and Senta Costello (Associate Planner).

Also present were John Shaver (Acting City Attorney) and Rick Dorris (Development Engineer).

Terri Troutner was present to record the minutes.

There were approximately 24 interested citizens present during the course of the hearing.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No minutes were considered.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS, PRESENTATIONS AND/OR VISITORS

There were no announcements, presentations and/or visitors.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

Offered for placement on the Consent Agenda were items ANX-2003-271 (Zone of Annexation--Summit View Estates), FP-2003-275 (Final Plan--St. Mary's Education Center), ANX-2004-011 (Zone of Annexation--Pellam Annexation), VE-2003-201 (Vacation of Easement--Cloverdale Easement) and PP-203-193 (Preliminary Plan--White Willows West Subdivision). At citizen request items ANX-2003-271 and FP-2003-275 were pulled from Consent and placed on the Full Hearing Agenda.

MOTION: (Commissioner Cole) "Mr. Chairman, I move [for the] approval of the Consent Agenda, items 3, 4 and 5."

Commissioner Cox seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

IV. FULL HEARING

ANX-2003-271 ZONE OF ANNEXATION--SUMMIT VIEW ESTATES

Request for approval to zone the Summit View Estates Annexation, consisting of 9.05 acres, from an RSF-R (Residential Single Family Rural) to an RMF-8 (Residential Multi-Family, 8 units/acre) zone district.

Petitioner: Carl D. Marchun

Location: 649 29 1/2 Road

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

Rebeka Wilmarth, representing the petitioner, offered a PowerPoint presentation containing the following slides: 1) overview of the proposal; 2) outline of development constraints; 3) map of the subject and surrounding properties; 4) photos of RMF-8 zoned properties within the Summit View Meadows and Summit View Ridge Subdivisions; 5) Growth Plan compliance criteria outline; and 6) conclusion.

Ms. Wilmarth noted that the majority of the surrounding area had been developed to densities of between 4 and 5 units/acre, with much of the surrounding zoning still within the County's jurisdiction. Ms. Wilmarth said that the City's RMF-8 zone district would afford a "mildly greater" density than the RMF-5 zone districts. Ms. Wilmarth identified site development constraints including right-of-way, the Marchun ditch and access limitations. With property frontages along both 29 1/2 and F 1/2 Roads, the less restrictive setback requirements of an RMF-8 zone district would give the developer greater design flexibility. The City required improvements to both street frontages and alignment with internal streets stub outs from adjacent properties. A higher density development would enable the petitioner to recoup some of the improvements costs. Ms. Wilmarth also pointed out an irrigation drainage easement bisecting the property north to south. Because no building will occur within the easement, its presence further restricted the property's development.

Ms. Wilmarth felt that the request met both Code criteria and Growth Plan recommendations. She noted that while the requested zone density was slightly more than the RMF-5, the RMF-8 zone would better facilitate the City's improvements requirements. It would also enable the developer to incorporate open space into the design.

STAFF'S PRESENTATION

Lisa Cox offered 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) project background; 6) findings and conclusions. Ms. Cox noted the presence of RSF-4 County zoned properties in the area. Ms. Cox noted that recently annexed properties to the west and south received City RMF-5 zoning. She agreed that the petitioner's property faced a number of design and development challenges. Ms. Cox acknowledged that RMF-8 zoning would provide greater flexibility in mitigating those challenges; the higher density zone district would allow for both single and multi-family units. Ms. Cox noted that the RMF-8 zone district implemented the upper range of the Growth Plan density requirement of 4 to 8 dwelling units per acre.

QUESTIONS

Chairman Dibble asked if recently annexed properties to the south and west had been developed. Ms. Cox said that these properties were currently undergoing review. She pointed out the higher density development locations of Brookside Subdivision and a smaller subdivision to the north and southeast of the subject property.

When asked by Chairman Dibble if staff had been present at the petitioner's neighborhood meeting, Ms. Cox replied affirmatively; however, while general questions had been asked by nearby residents, no significant or controversial issues had arisen. Since that time, density seemed to have become a more important issue.

Commissioner Cole asked if the two recently annexed properties faced similar development constraints, to which Ms. Cox replied "no." She noted the locations of each property and detailed the constraints applicable to each property. Ms. Cox noted that while the RMF-8 zone would allow greater design flexibility, it did not automatically mean that the petitioner would receive approval to develop at the density allowed by that zoning.

Chairman Dibble asked if the RMF-8 zone would permit construction of duplexes and other multi-family units. Ms. Cox replied affirmatively.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

FOR:

There were no comments for the request.

AGAINST:

Jim Eldridge (663 29 1/2 Road, Grand Junction) felt that the requested zone district was incompatible with the surrounding area. He said that such a high density would be out of character with the neighborhood and would result in dramatic impacts to area roads. He strongly objected to the construction of any multi-family homes, pointing out that uses in the entire area were either agricultural or single-family residential.

Louise Burns (no address given) said that there are only 20 homes in her subdivision. Development of the petitioner's property to a density of 8 units/acre would result in another 72 homes for a single subdivision. She said density was clearly incompatible with the surrounding area.

Kathy Deppe-Spomer (no address given) also expressed opposition to the proposal. The petitioner, she said, should find ways of complying with the requirements of a less intense zone district.

Max Sneddon (no address given), owner of properties to the west and south (20 acres and 5 acres, respectively) currently under development review, said that he'd had to comply with the requirements of an RMF-5 zone district and so should the current petitioner.

Mark Young (2942 Erika Drive, Grand Junction), project engineer for Mr. Sneddon's development, said that development densities of those two properties were approximately 4 units/acre. Because the petitioner's property hadn't yet been annexed into the City, he urged planning commissioners to consider tabling the Zone of Annexation request pending submission of the corresponding development plan. He felt that substantial consideration should be given to traffic impacts along 29 1/2 Road, especially because it was slated for a future upgrade to principal arterial. He reemphasized the current single-family character of the area and the presence of larger lots with nice homes situated upon them. Mr. Young felt that the petitioner was misrepresenting the project by stating that densities allowed by the requested zone district were "mildly greater" than other nearby zone districts. The site's current zoning is County RSF-R (1 du/5 acres); a development density of 8 units/acre, one that included multi-family homes, represented a radical increase (appx. 200%) in density. The density difference between the RMF-5 and RMF-8 zone districts was approximately 60%. While Mr. Snedden's smallest lot size would be appx. 7,000 square feet, lot sizes for the Summit View development would be closer to 3,500 square feet. He also felt that Growth Plan policies 5 and 7 had not been satisfied. Mr. Young urged planning commissioners to carefully consider the concerns of the neighbors and either deny the current request or table it pending submission of the site plan. He also asked that residents be given the opportunity to review any Preliminary Plan proposal submitted by the petitioner.

PETITIONER'S REBUTTAL

Ms. Wilmarth said that to construct a project that was incompatible with the neighborhood would be self-defeating, because buyers would not be interested. Nor, she felt, would people be interested in the purchase of multi-family units in that area. Her "mildly greater" reference had been in comparing the RMF-5 zone with the RMF-8 zone.

Mansel Zeck, the project's developer, thought it unfortunate that none of the residents who spoke against the request had been present at the neighborhood meeting. If they had been, they would have been able to review the preliminary subdivision plan. He said that no multi-family units are proposed. Lots would be between 6,000-8,000 square feet in size; homes would be 1,400 to 2,000 square feet in size and feature 3 bedrooms, 2 baths and a garage. Only 41 homesites are proposed. Mr. Zeck said that his company always considered surrounding neighborhood densities and character, incorporating those elements into each development proposal. The RMF-8 zone request was not about achieving disproportionately high development densities; rather, it was to acquire the design flexibility required to build a compatible project and still satisfy the City's improvements requirements. Further detail on the actual development proposal would be provided during preliminary plat review.

QUESTIONS

Chairman Dibble asked staff to clarify the differences between RSF and RMF classifications. Ms. Cox said that the City's RMF zone classification permitted a variety of housing options, including multi-family. The current County RSF-R zone classification was inconsistent with Growth Plan recommendations and as such could not be converted to a City equivalent upon annexation. Because the RSF-R zone district was not consistent with the Growth Plan density recommendations, the applicant had to rezone the property. Ms. Cox reiterated that approval of the RMF-8 zone district did not guarantee development approval to the maximum allowed density. She said that a number of engineering and planning staff, as well as review agency staff, were involved in the review of rezone requests. Density, infrastructure and development impacts, such as traffic, were always carefully scrutinized. A traffic study had been required of the petitioner and was currently undergoing review by qualified engineers. Ms. Cox said that the request had been placed on Consent because until yesterday there had been no concerns or controversy stated with the current request.

Commissioner Putnam asked if the demarcation line bisecting the property shown on the map represented the actual location of the irrigation easement. Ms. Cox said that the referenced line denoted a common property line between two parcels. She noted the actual location of the easement on an available aerial photo.

Commissioner Redifer said that even if the petitioner submitted a plan asking for the maximum allowed density, the Planning Commission would still review the preliminary plat density for appropriateness. He added just because a petitioner asked for a higher density didn't mean that it was automatically granted because the Planning Commission still had approval jurisdiction over the plan.

DISCUSSION

John Shaver said that the Planning Commission had jurisdiction over properties such as this that requested annexation. He said that the Commission could legally recommend a zone district prior to completion of the annexation process.

Commissioner Evans said that given development constraints there would be no way the subject property could develop to a density of 8 units/acre. Because the request met both Code criteria and Growth Plan recommendations, he supported its approval.

Commissioner Cox felt there to be sufficient justification to support the RMF-8 zone request. He agreed that approval of the zone didn't automatically guarantee approval of the maximum density allowed by that zone. Because the request met legal criteria, he too expressed support.

Commissioner Cole said that the preliminary plat specifics would be further reviewed and discussed when the Preliminary Plat came before the Planning Commission. He supported staff's recommendation for approval of the RMF-8 zone request.

Chairman Dibble felt that the request did not meet criterion 7 regarding community benefit, especially with regard to traffic impacts along the 29 1/2 Road corridor. Recently annexed properties to the west and south were successfully developing to lesser densities; the subject property should do the same. He felt he could not support the proposed zone request.

Commissioner Putnam observed that people oftentimes equated multi-family development with "instant slum" and that was hardly a fair assessment. He agreed with staff's conclusion that the RMF-8 zone district represented the best choice, given the scope of development constraints. He supported approval of the current request.

Commissioner Redifer acknowledged that the Planning Commission would not know the specifics of the development until a preliminary plan was submitted for review. The RMF-8 zone district would give the petitioner the flexibility needed to make a better project. It did not mean that the petitioner would be allowed to

do whatever he wanted at any density he wanted. Area compatibility would be considered during the preliminary plan review as would the comments and concerns of area residents.

MOTION: (Commissioner Cox) "Mr. Chairman, on item ANX-2003-271, the Summit View Estates Annexation, I move that we forward a recommendation of approval to City Council, with the finding that the request is consistent with the goals and policies of the Growth Plan and all applicable sections of the Zoning and Development Code.

Commissioner Cole seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed by a vote of 5-1, with Chairman Dibble opposing.

FP-2003-275 FINAL PLAN--ST. MARY'S EDUCATION CENTER

A request for approval to construct a 5,500 square foot education center on the western campus of St. Mary's Hospital.

Petitioner: Keith Estridge--St. Mary's Hospital

Location: 2635 North 7th Street

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

Rob Jenkins, representing the petitioner, overviewed the request. Mr. Jenkins said that the education center represented one of three amendments to the St. Mary's 2003 Master Plan, approved by the Planning Commission in August 2003. He noted the building's proposed layout on the Final Plan and said that additional parking would be provided at the same time.

STAFF'S PRESENTATION

Lisa Cox offered 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) project background; and 6) findings and conclusions. Ms. Cox said that the request was consistent with the goals and policies of the Growth Plan; the design standards of the Zoning Code; and St. Mary's previously approved Master Plan. Staff recommended approval of the request.

QUESTIONS

Commissioner Cox asked for clarification of the parking layout, which was provided. When asked if the Patterson Road entrance located mid-way along the parcel would remain, Ms. Cox replied affirmatively, adding that at some future point it would be relocated.

Commissioner Cox asked if offsite traffic would be directed to the new education center, to which Ms. Cox responded negatively. The new education center was for the use of hospital staff only. Those using the facility would already be onsite, having parked their vehicles in designated parking areas.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

FOR:

There were no comments for the request.

AGAINST:

Leanne DuPre (307 Bookcliff Court, Grand Junction) acknowledged that she'd just moved to Grand Junction and purchased a home near the hospital site. Her presence at the public hearing was just to find out more about the hospital's plans.

Chairman Dibble suggested that Ms. DuPre contact Mr. Jenkins outside of the public meeting forum. She would then be able to peruse the hospital's overall Master Plan and obtain all the information she desired at that time.

MOTION: (Commissioner Cole) "Mr. Chairman, on item FP-2003-275, a request for approval of a 5,500 square foot education center, I move that we approve subject to staff conditions, with the findings and conclusions as outlined by staff above."

Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

ELECTION

Paul Dibble was re-elected as Planning Commission Chairman and Roland Cole as Vice Chairman.

With no further business to discuss, the public hearing was adjourned at 8:40 P.M.