

GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
March 8, 2016 MINUTES
6:00 p.m. to 6:46 p.m.

The meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Vice-Chairman Ebe Eslami. The hearing was held in the City Hall Auditorium located at 250 N. 5th Street, Grand Junction, Colorado.

Also in attendance representing the City Planning Commission were Jon Buschhorn, Keith Ehlers, Aaron Miller, Steve Tolle, and Bill Wade.

In attendance, representing the City's Administration Department - Community Development, was Greg Moberg, (Development Services Manager) and Brian Rusche, (Senior Planner).

Also present was Jamie Beard (Assistant City Attorney).

Lydia Reynolds was present to record the minutes.

There were 17 citizens in attendance during the hearing.

Announcements, Presentations and/or Visitors

None

Consent Agenda

1. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Action: Approve the minutes from the February 9, 2016 Planning Commission Meeting.

Vice-Chairman Eslami briefly explained the Consent Agenda and invited the public, Planning Commissioners and staff to speak if they wanted the item pulled for a full hearing.

With no amendments to the Consent Agenda, Vice-Chairman Eslami called for a motion.

MOTION: (Commissioner Wade) "Mr. Chairman, I move that we accept the Consent Agenda as presented."

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

*****INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION*****

2. Christian Living Services, Outline Development Plan [File # PLD-2015-464]

Request to rezone from R-O (Residential Office) to PD (Planned Development) and an Outline Development Plan to develop a 58,000 square foot Assisted Living Facility on 2.37 acres in a PD (Planned Development) zone district.

Action: Recommendation to City Council

Applicant: Jim West Builder, Inc. - Owner
Confluent Development – Applicant
Ciavonne, Roberts and Associates - Representative
Location: 628 26 1/2 Road
Staff presentation: Brian Rusche, Senior Planner

Staff Presentation

Brian Rusche (Senior Planner) displayed a site plan and explained that this is a request to rezone property located at 628 26 ½ Road from R-O (Residential Office) to PD (Planned Development) zone district. In conjunction with this request is the request for approval of an Outline Development Plan (ODP) to develop a 58,000 square foot Assisted Living Facility.

The 2.37 acre site is an unusually shaped triangular lot located at the northeast corner of 26 ½ Road (also known as North 7th St.) and Horizon Drive. The surrounding land uses include three churches, multi-family, and a small amount of single family homes to the north and west. Mr. Rusche noted that St. Mary's hospital is approximately one half mile to the south of this site.

Mr. Rusche explained that the proposed project will provide both assisted living and memory support residential units. The property is designated Residential-Medium on the future land use map of the Comprehensive Plan (2010).

The present zoning of R-O has no maximum residential density and would permit an assisted living facility. However, the R-O zone also has a maximum building size of 10,000 square feet. The PD request is asking for a deviation from that requirement to allow for one building that is not to exceed 58,000 square feet. In addition, two other deviations from the R-O standards include the location of the front door and alignment with other properties.

Mr. Rusche noted that the proposed facility will address a regional need for assisted living and memory care beds for an aging population, while adding jobs for the community and physical improvements to the property.

Mr. Rusche displayed the Outline Development Plan which is intended to be adopted concurrently with the request to change the zone from R-O to Planned Development. Mr. Rusche explained that the Outline Development Plan sets up the parameters for future development on the property.

Findings of Facts/Conclusions

Mr. Rusche stated that the request is consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive plan, specifically Goal 12. In addition, the review criteria in Section 21.02.150 of the Grand Junction Municipal Code have all been met or addressed.

One of the requirements for a Planned Development is that it provides a community benefit. Mr. Rusche noted some of the benefits are; efficient infrastructure by having one large building, the type of use will generate less traffic than other uses which are allowed, the proposal responds to the demands of needed housing for an aging population and innovative design.

Vice Chairman Eslami requested that Mr. Rusche explain the difference between R-O (Residential Office) and PD (Planned Development) and the Comprehensive Plan, for the benefit of students in attendance. Mr. Rusche gave a brief explanation of these two zones and explained how the Planned Development offered flexibility in allowing for deviations to certain design standards to create a plan that also adds community benefits.

Commissioner Wade asked if more than one 10,000 square foot building is allowed in an R-O zone. Mr. Rusche confirmed that R-O does allow for more than one building that size.

Commissioner Buschhorn noted that the staff report states that a group living facility needs to be 750 feet away from any other group living facility in order to get licensed. He asked Mr. Rusche if nearby Mesa View is within that range. Mr. Rusche explained that Mesa View predates the group living ordinance and is a different kind of facility. They are independent retirement residences, not group living.

Applicant's Presentation

H McNeish representing Confluent Development, 2240 Blake St. Denver, CO displayed a slide noting the members of the development team who are present in the audience. Mr. McNeish explained that Christian Living Services (CLS) is the developer and operator of the senior living project and displayed a slide of their mission statement. He noted that they strive to create a community not a facility. Mr. McNeish explained that the core values under which the company operates goes beyond providing the services of the facility.

Mr. McNeish stated that the project consists of a 2 story, 66 unit Senior Living community with 40 units of that being assisted living and 26 units for Memory Care.

Although there are only 49 parking spaces required, the project provides 72 spaces with a shared parking agreement with the adjacent Church. Mr. McNeish noted that in addition to quality residential design and materials, a third of the property will be landscaped.

Mr. McNeish displayed a concept plan for informational purposes and noted that the primary access is off of Horizon Drive. This is a full access that was a result of a TEDS (Transportation, Engineering and Design Standard) exception that has been granted through the process. Another full access would be off of 26 ½ Road where there is currently an access for the Church, however they will be improving that access. Mr. McNeish mentioned that they will be improving the sidewalks both on Horizon Dr. and 26 ½ in addition to an internal sidewalk network and connect to an existing pedestrian trail that is on the east side of the Lutheran Church.

Mr. McNeish gave a brief overview of the requested deviations and community benefits that Mr. Rusche had provided in the staff presentation.

Questions for Applicant

Commissioner Ehlers mentioned that it is his understanding that the canal that runs on the property along Horizon Dr. has different ownership with one portion being an easement and another portion a right-of-way. Commissioner Ehlers asked if they would need a deviation from a setback. Mr. McNeish stated that they would not need a deviation and they would be meeting or exceeding the 20 foot setback.

Commissioner Wade asked if there was a security concern regarding the canal since there were memory care units at the facility. Mr. McNeish explained that in addition to the building being secured, there is a proposed courtyard in the center of the building to provide an outdoor experience to the residents of the memory care units.

Commissioner Wade noted that they appreciated being able to see a concept plan especially since it is not required for a rezone.

Public Comment

Vice-Chairman Eslami opened the meeting for the public comment portion and asked for anyone in favor of the project to line up at the podium. Having no one respond, Vice-Chairman Eslami asked for those against the proposal to sign in and speak.

Mr. Joel Dyk, 642 26 ½ Road stated that he was concerned that there would be increased foot traffic in his front yard as a result of this development. Mr. Dyk was also concerned about the property values of his neighborhood. In his neighborhood there are three people living on one-half acre and this project calls for 88 people living on 2 ½ acres. Another concern Mr. Dyk addressed was the connectivity of sidewalks both present and future.

Commissioner Wade asked for the aerial photo to be displayed. Mr. Dyk noted that the Lutheran Church shared the cost of a fence, approximately 240 feet, along his property line. Mr. Dyk noted that there is a pedestrian trail to the east of his property that jogs around his fence and comes in front of his house and dead ends at 26 ½ Rd to the west. Mr. Dyk stated that he is not opposed to the project; however he did want to voice his concerns.

Mr. Rusche stated that this project would increase the sidewalk network and links in the area, with St. Mary's in the South to the Church just to the north.

Mr. McNeish asked if the trail on the Four Square Church to the east, is a public trail. Mr. Rusche confirmed that it was a public trail. Mr. McNeish pointed out that this development will create sidewalks that connect to the public trail, as that is a community amenity, and there also will be sidewalk connectivity to the Church with the entrance improvements along 26 ½ Rd. Any additional improvements would be on other properties and therefore out of their control.

Mr. McNeish added that they had held a neighborhood meeting where approximately 20 people showed up and there was no opposition to the project voiced.

Commissioner Ehlers explained that there is a Transportation Capacity Payment that developers are required to pay to the City and the City uses some of this fee to provide sidewalks along roads that are classified as minor collectors or above where it is deemed warranted. Commissioner Ehlers noted that this development concept has gone above and beyond the requirements where the sidewalks are concerned.

Commissioner Toole asked Mr. Rusche if there was a walking and bike path on both sides of 26 ½ Road. Mr. Rusche stated that if there was, it was not hard surface. Commissioner Toole stated he believed there was a bicycle/pedestrian lane as part of the road. Mr. Rusche stated he could not confirm that.

With no further questions, Vice Chairman Eslami closed the public hearing portion of the meeting.

Discussion

Commissioner Ehlers expressed his appreciation to view the conceptual site plan, however he wanted to make clear that he was basing his decision on the proposed rezone criteria and Outline Development Plan. Commissioner Ehlers mentioned that this proposal makes sense given the property's unique location and shape. Commissioner Ehlers added that the surrounding properties, although zoned residential, are churches.

In addition, the shared parking easement to the back of the property is an asset and allows for the building orientation to be up front with parking in back. Commission Ehlers stated that he believes that the findings in the staff report are accurate.

Vice-Chairman Eslami stated that this project appears to be a good fit for that challenging location.

With no further comments, Vice Chairman Eslami called for a motion.

MOTION: (Commissioner Wade) “Mr. Chairman, I move that based on the staff report, and our consideration, that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval for the request to rezone from R-O (Residential-Office) to a PD (Planned Development) and an Outline Development Plan to develop a 58,000 square foot assisted living facility on 2.37 acres in a Planned Development Zone District (PLD-2015-464) that we forward our recommendation in the affirmative to City Council.”

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

3. Nonscheduled Citizens and/or Visitors

None

4. Other Business

Mr. Moberg reminded the Commissioners that there will be a second workshop this month, however there will not be a second hearing this month.

5. Adjournment

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 6:46 p.m.