

Community Development Department

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**MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
JUNE 7, 2022
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Members Present: Lisa Moody, Patricia LaRue(virtual), Chris Holtkamp(virtual), Diane Odeen, Rebecca Prendergast, Dan Toland

Members Absent: Mike Woolsey

Staff Present: Amy Peterson, Emily Shively, Kendra Ellner, Sam Burns, Angie Bond, Jon Smits, Keri Schreiner

Others Present: Jeff Bjork, Scott Morrissette, Sean Downing

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/Odeen, S/Prendergast to approve minutes. Motion carried 5/0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sean Downing, 421 W. Division St., commented on the un-dedication of parkland in Sterling Ponds. Park Board and City Council passed the park plan, he would like to see obligations that have already been in place be honored. Kathy Peterson, 3166 Sussex St., commented that as a resident, a group home or apartment complex is not a good fit in Sterling Ponds. Traffic will be an issue with the limited access. Children and animals are present. A commercial facility will cause safety issues. Mayor Toland states there are no active plans in place for the area, this is strictly a parkland un-dedication request. Elizabeth Bowden, 217 Clark St., commented on transparency being important and undoing something that has been committed to does not build confidence. Another issue is the 500 acres of farmland being turned in to Autobahn racetrack. Residents are concerned, and please think about the values you have committed to and take into consideration that residents are proud of natural resources and value parkland. Jay Benson, 217 Clark St., commented that an auto-based community built on property the City is annexing is not a good idea. Noise is a concern and this is not a good choice to make.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Resolution to approve the Specific Implementation Plan for Lake George Lofts (141 W. Cascade Ave.)

Planner Sam Burns provided a brief presentation and conveyed that Gerrard LLC has submitted an application for the third phase of the University Falls Development. The first two phases were completed in 2010 which included two twelve-unit multifamily buildings on W. Cascade Ave. The GDP for the third phase of the project was approved in March 2022. The four-story apartment building will include 32 units including studios, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units. The design will include a lobby, mail room, leasing office and covered parking on the first floor. Parking plan will include 24 interior and 28 exterior parking spaces. The applicant is providing a public access connection from W. Cascade Ave to the

Kinnickinnic trail. Staff is recommending that the Plan Commission forward the resolution to Council with a favorable recommendation.

M/Moody, S/Odeen to approve the resolution approving the Specific Implementation Plan for Lake George Lofts. Motion carried 6/0.

Resolution to approve the un-dedication of parkland in Sterling Ponds.

Community Development Director Amy Peterson provided a summary and background of the parkland in Sterling Ponds. The area had been undeveloped and farmed, and in 2002 it was annexed to be developed by Ames Development, LLC. In 2003, Arcon Development, Inc. purchased it and a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) was proposed with 676 units. Some development occurred and in 2007 the recession caused development to halt. Arcon started selling off some of the area. In 2010 the City held a workshop with the residents in the area to discuss amenities in the current 4 acre park. The City prefunded equipment and park amenities as the funding wasn't available from the lots. The plat went from primarily housing with some commercial areas and parkland in 2003. In 2011, the City purchased 74 acres for the Sterling Ponds Corporate Park. In 2018, 2.5 acres were sold to GMTZ for housing. Multiple phases of subdivisions have been constructed. In 2020, the Sterling Ponds Park Plan was approved and in 2021 the Park Plan began to be implemented. The Park Plan recommends un-dedicating 3 acres of parkland to the NW of the current park. The intent of the Sterling Ponds Park Plan is to review the City's existing park and open space acreage against City parkland dedication requirements, determine recreation needs in the area, and recommend maintenance and improvements for the Sterling Ponds Park. Parkland, open space, active and passive recreation are considered in the analysis of the Park Plan. Sterling Ponds Park Plan includes 57.02 acres of open space and 13.57 acres of parkland. The National Park and Recreation standards recommends a minimum 3 acres of parkland for 1,000 residents. The existing park supports that standard. City code requires 24.3 acres of parkland but doesn't consider the open space areas. Additional consideration should be given to the 3 regional parks as well as future regional parks as part of the Outdoor Recreation planning process and ultimately the Comprehensive Plan. The proposal in the plan is to un-dedicate 3 of the 4 acres of the northwest parcel for neighborhood commercial development. This would add an acre to the existing park giving it 5 acres. The survey in 2010 had resident responses including implementing walking, biking plans and those were implemented. In 2019 another survey went out and top 3 desires were walking, biking paths, picnic area and ball fields. All of those were incorporated in the plan. An RFP is out for landscaping, and grading. The picnic shelter will be installed in the next year or two. The next steps, if favorable, will be for City Council review and County Circuit Court determination for un-dedication process. Staff recommends Plan Commission approve the resolution to continue the un-dedication process and forward the resolution to City Council with a favorable recommendation. It will move on to City Council.

M/Holtkamp, S/Odeen to approve the resolution approving the un-dedication of parkland in Sterling Ponds. Odeen asked for the Circuit Court process. Peterson stated Council makes an application to Circuit Court. It is not known if the process is an administrative review process. Moody commented about the need for housing and what precipitated the commercial residential in the parkland location. Peterson explained that the TND zoning in Sterling Ponds requires mixed uses, including commercial. Holtkamp mentioned the parkland location and commercial uses not being ideal there. Peterson stated that neighborhood commercial is desired. For example, a fitness center or daycare. LaRue stated that the market and ownership has changed over the years and those who made decisions in 2003 are not those making decisions today. Open space/parkland and parkland ownership was clarified. Peterson stated that the decision was made to try to balance between the two standards, the City park ordinance and National Park regulations and create the best scenario for Sterling Ponds. They are looking at the resident's best interest as well as the City's best interest. LaRue mentioned the city surveys for the

Comprehensive Plan update and how there was emphasis from residents placed on the importance of parks in numerous questions on the survey. LaRue is hesitant to go from the 18 acres required per ordinance to 5 acres. LaRue stated taking more time to allow the residents to weigh in before un-dedicating is preferred. LaRue stated that Sterling Ponds is removed from the City so she can also see the need for commercial in that location but the residents should have a chance to voice their preference. Odeen clarified that the park ordinance states that whenever a development is created the developer shall be required to dedicate 10% of the area for parks, and open spaces. Odeen stated Sterling Ponds does have open spaces including trails and disc golf course. LaRue asked for clarification on which court would hear the un-dedication and Peterson said St. Croix as that is where Sterling Ponds is located. Clarification was also discussed regarding park impact fees and what has been implemented in the Sterling Ponds Park area since 2019. Peterson stated that bids are out for the berm, landscaping and if funding possibly sign, benches, picnic tables this year. Picnic shelter, more paved trails, and additional playground equipment is not in the budget until approximately 2027. It was clarified by Peterson that parkland impact fees collected are pooled together and 60% goes to regional parks and 40% goes to neighborhood parks. Staff and Council determines what the parks need and what funds they will get. Holtkamp asked for clarification on the un-dedication as far as how the land gets back to the City and the process for determining what will be done with it. Peterson stated there would be an agreement between the developer and City. The City markets the lot, assuming the un-dedication is successful. Kevin Smith, Sterling Ponds resident is concerned that a lot that is not undedicated is being marketed. He stated the park gets used heavily. The undedicated land is not used because it's not taken care of, but if it was parkland, it would get used. He would like to see the land stay parkland. Mayor stated the City is proud of our parks and we need to remember the cost of maintaining the parks and money is a huge factor in these decisions. Moody inquired how many lots are in Sterling Ponds, Peterson gave an estimate of 470 with approximately less than 20 buildable lots left. Kathy Peterson, Sterling ponds resident, stated she chose Sterling Ponds because of the open space and park space. It concerns her that the area is marketed without being un-dedicated. Commercial use should get feedback from residents. Odeen stated this is an important enough issue that should go before City Council. It is an existing plan that has been partially implemented. Don Peterson, 3166 Sussex St., is concerned with the traffic situation, as traffic will increase, and there is one way in and two ways out no matter what goes in. Joelle Haley, Sterling ponds resident stated that none of the decision makers live in the neighborhood. Haley asked why the undedicated parkland needs to be commercial when there is unused land in the corporate park. Peterson answered that the corporate park is zoned industrial and the TND zoning in Sterling Ponds requires some commercial. Haley stated that it is not rumors if there is already a plan for a daycare or convenience store to go there. Mayor said there is no such plan. Haley asked to be informed when something is happening in their neighborhood. Odeen shared how to sign up for notification of city meetings on the website. Jay Benson asked Lisa moody if she has heard of Autobahn.com. Lisa replied, no.

With no further comments or questions, the Mayor asked for a vote. The roll call vote did not pass 2-4 with Odeen and Toland voting in favor; and Holtkamp, LaRue, Moody, and Prendergast voting against.

Director's Report

Community Development Director Amy Peterson provided an update on upcoming Plan Commission meeting dates, the July 5 and September 6 meetings are right after the holiday. No objections to those dates. Engage RF currently has over 600 people registered, and a walking tour is scheduled. Code Enforcement ordinance updates are scheduled for next month. Economic Development is focusing on RFEDC duties and the Mann Valley development project. Powell Ave. Bridge construction will occur in 2023. The North Water Tower construction will begin in June and the Wells Park sidewalk design is being worked on.

ADJOURNMENT

Moody made a motion to adjourn at 7:41 p.m. S/Odeen; motion carried 5/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Angie Bond, Community Development Assistant