

**CITY OF HANOVER
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MAY 29, 2024
OFFICIAL MINUTES**

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Stan Kolasa called the May 29, 2024, Planning Commission Meeting to order at 7:01 pm. Members present were Stan Kolasa, Jim Schendel, Gretchen Barrett, John Ganfield, and Chad Olson. Also present City Planner Cindy Nash, Council Liaison Mike Amery and Administrative Assistant Amy Biren. Guests were present.

Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Schendel to approve the agenda, seconded by Barrett.

Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from the April 22, 2024, Regular Meeting

MOTION by Schendel to approve the April 22, 2024, minutes, seconded by Barrett.

Motion carried unanimously.

Citizen's Forum

None

Public Hearing

None

Unfinished Business

Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Rezoning, and Concept Plan at 999 Kalenda Lane, NE

Nash explained Council members had discussed the application for the amendment, rezoning and concept plan at both May meetings. They directed the applicant to revise the concept plan and bring it back to the Planning Commission for feedback. The Council has not made any decisions on the application.

Megan Rogers, Larkin Hoffman and spokesperson for JP Brooks, thanked the Planning Commission members for taking the time to read the letter that was sent late in the day. Rogers directed the members to the table on page two (2) of the letter which showed how the number of lots has decreased since the first concept plan in August 2023. The initial concept plan consisted of a total of 197 lots with 134 lots being in Hanover and the rest in St. Michael. The concept plan before the Board tonight shows a total of 164 lots with 100 of the lots in Hanover. She continued with how the developer added the requested park and trails along with a conservation easement. The developer listened to the Council's concerns regarding lot size, particularly the 55-foot-wide lots, and their location. With this feedback, the 55-foot-wide lots border the St. Michael-Hanover line and along Beebe Lake Road. They believe these lots provide starter homes in the community and will be built into the grade as it is the best fit for the topography. They also heard the concerns with the number of homes and have reduced the number of homes in the development.

Rogers continued with how the proposed concept plan is consistent with the planned unit development (PUD) outlined in the zoning ordinance:

- It is consistent with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan with the pending amendment.
- Access to the development is from Beebe Lake Road and the grade is maintained as part of the development, preserving the steep slopes, wetlands, and natural features. Drainage ponds will be constructed. The developer is the builder so there will be architectural consistency throughout the development.
- The PUD is consistent with the other developments in the area and the Hanover market.

- The development will not be phased and the infrastructure will be completed as part of the initial construction. Homes will be built as the lot is sold.
- There is not a burden on parks, schools, and streets. It will not negatively impact the environment.

Olson stated with the PUD as proposed, none of the lots are meeting the zoning requirements. He referenced the developer's current project, Rivers Edge, and how that was able to meet zoning requirements. Rogers responded the proposed development has a significantly different grade that determines the lots in relationship to the cost of infrastructure. She added that looking at the market and who is buying the lots shows the proposed lots are affordable to more people.

Olson responded saying that larger lots are selling more in Hanover than the smaller lots. He said that there is a need to have options and different types of housing. He sees the proposed development as being more of what is already in Hanover. Rogers reminded the Board that the lots are being built by a single builder who knows this market well. Other developments in Hanover are being built by a variety of builders. JP Brooks is averaging 12 homes a year. She continued saying the grade of the property will give the appearance and feeling of larger lots and there will be options for buyers.

Olson asked how the proposed development keeps the rural feel.

Rogers said that Beebe Lake Road is a throughway to the downtown area. The proposed development has 20 percent (20%) of it preserved for green space which is like the Anderson Farm (Highlands and Vistas at Crow River). The proposed development has significant amenities to make the community feel more open and sees that as a benefit.

Rogers went on to explain that the types of homes that JP Brooks build usually differ in size based on the size of the garage: two or three garages. More garage space provides the potential owner with a larger lot. She reiterated that the grade will also contribute to a larger, more open feel to the development.

Rogers reminded the Board that there will be improvements to Beebe Lake Road. Also, based on feedback, a park was added where there was not one required as well as a conservation easement. The developer is working with the property as it exists today.

Olson stated he does not see 100 homes retaining the rural characteristics of Hanover. Rogers responded saying that not all of Hanover is rural in nature. Olson said he does not see diversity in properties.

Kolasa said that having the smaller lots along the border of St. Michael seems like the right location. He also stated that land is limited along this northern edge of Hanover.

Ganfield said that in the past, the Rivers Edge development was opposed, but it turned out great. He wonders if another development with smaller lots would do the same. He said he sees two different types of properties, one that is in a former gravel pit and the proposed one on rolling elevations.

Rogers responded that the proposed development is bridging two communities. The St. Michael standard for lot width is 65 feet. She believes this plan bridges the difference in lot width standards. The developer looked at public feedback and made changes so the density is averaging two (2) homes per acre.

Olson disagreed and stated that social media shows residents not in favor of this development and sees this proposal as being about finances and circumventing the zoning code.

Rogers brought the Board's attention back to the items outlined in the letter and how the developer responded to feedback to change aspects of the development.

Barrett stated she has been attending Council meetings and sees Council as looking for 80-foot-wide lots and that is why the concept plan is back before the Board. Nash responded the lot width is not the reason it was brought before the Board, rather Council is seeking the Planning Commission's opinion.

Nash added that currently Hanover has two developments with 80-foot-wide lots and the lots are not selling.

Kolasa said what he is hearing at the meeting is that 80-foot-wide lots are desired.

Rogers stated that previously, the Planning Commission had given a recommendation for approval with more lots being proposed. She asked for guidance on what had changed since that recommendation.

Ganfield mentioned the 55-foot-wide lots do not feel right.

Olson said that Rivers Edge was 70-foot-wide lots and this one is mostly similar lots. He thinks the proposed concept plan will drastically change the property.

Nash stated that the Planning Commission does need to make a recommendation to Council and comments from the Board members on how this proposed plan could be better would be appreciated. She said that having all 80-foot-wide lots would be a significant loss. If the Planning Commission is looking at some lots at that width and others at different widths, it would be good to have comments for the premise.

Kolasa agreed that having some at the 80-foot width and others would work. He does not see all the lots at having an 80-foot width.

Ganfield said the smaller lots could be by the St. Michael border and along Beebe Lake Road. Nash said that the topography would have the lots by the road as walk-out styled homes.

Schendel proposed having the lots near the rear as the larger lots and the smaller lots along the St. Michael border.

Olson stated he would like to see the smaller lots be in the St. Michael portion of the development and send the recommendation of Hanover's portion of the development be lots 80 feet wide.

Barrett asked Olson if he was worried with another development having 80-foot-wide lots and not selling. She said she talked to the realtor for River Landing about the cost of the lots and the amount selling. She said that the lots vary between \$158,000 and \$195,000 just for the land. Only one lot has sold.

Barrett referred to the cost of infrastructure in the proposed development and how it would increase with only 80-foot-wide lots to almost \$100,000 per lot. This is not the price the consumer would pay for the lot which would be more. She asked would lots at this price sell?

Rogers added that when homes are built, there is also an appraisal that is done. Most appraisals are coming in at the \$450,000-\$500,000 range.

Rogers stated that if the recommendation is for 80-foot-wide lots, the park, trails, and conservation easement goes away as it would not be required under regular zoning.

Ganfield asked how the Crow River Heights West developments had been zoned. Nash responded that in some locations, the lots are meeting size requirements and setbacks. There is a PUD in the developments due to the coving prevalent in the design. The areas were previously graded for this design and it was decided to follow it. Coving has a build-to setback in the front that dictates how far back from the front property line to preserve the meandering feel of the development. Some houses are 30 feet from the front, others may be further back at 35 feet. Some lots also have a smaller rear yard setback as the wetlands and stormwater ponds have been placed into outlots to prevent encroachment by property owners.

Steve Schirmer, 885 Katydid Lane, asked the Board if the property stays zoned as Commercial and a buyer comes in with a proposal that flattens the property and constructs a commercial building, how would that retain character and a rural feel.

Olson said he doesn't disagree and feels that the Comprehensive Plan needs to be reviewed.

Nash reaffirmed the property was rezoned to B-2, Highway Commercial, in 2018.

Kolasa, Schendel, Barrett, and Ganfield agreed that not all the lots need to be 80 feet wide. Olson said he was not opposed to villa lots, but wanted it primarily to be 80-foot-wide lots.

Barrett said there is a market for the villa style homes and the ones in Rivers Edge have been beautifully built. She wants to be able to give clear direction to the developer and Council.

Olson asked about having a zoning district specifically for villa homes. Nash explained in 2018, there was a lot of discussion about the villa style of homes and there was a hesitancy in having them as a zoning district by right instead of a PUD. She added that builders want to build a few different types of housing with different price points within a zoning district. By designating a zoning district as one type of housing, the city lacks housing variety.

MOTION by Olson to recommend approval for 80-foot-wide lots and villa lots 55 feet wide in the concept plan, seconded by Schendel.

Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Reports and Announcements

The Board thanked Biren for her service to the Planning Commission and the City. They wished her well in her new position.

Amery reviewed the recent Council meetings. The Council accepted a donation from the Hanover Athletic Association for fencing on the ballfield to protect viewers from foul balls. The Hilltop site plan and variance was approved. The proposed rezoning of the 5th Street property from multi-family to I-2 was tabled. Amery indicated that a conditional use permit with specific conditions was being looked at. Nash reiterated that is not legal and not an option as discussed during the April meeting. Nash also stated that the applicant has extended his option to purchase the property from the May 31, 2024, deadline.

Adjournment

MOTION by Schendel to adjourn, seconded by Olson.

Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

ATTEST:

Amy L. Biren
Administrative Assistant