

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR VOTING MEETING OF THE
FAIRFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION
JANUARY 12, 2022**

Scott Lepsky called the Regular Meeting of the Fairfield Planning Commission to order. Members present: Scott Lepsky, Marty Medler, Missy O'Brien, Matt Davidson, and Gwen Ritchie. Motion to excuse Don Hassler carried unanimously.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held December 8, 2021 were approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

I. **Concept Plan for Planned Unit Development – 5846 Pleasant Ave.**

An application has been submitted for approval of a concept plan for a planned unit development at 5846 Pleasant Avenue. The current zoning of the property is R-0, One Family Residence zoning district. Erin Lynn, Planning Manager, gave an overview of the PUD process. The subject property consists of 3.4 acres of land including several parcels, all under the same ownership. The existing home will remain, along with the existing detached garage. There is an accessory building farther back on the property that will be removed. The existing driveway will be removed and relocated to the new street. The surrounding properties have similar layouts with long and narrow lots. The Emerald Lake subdivision across the street is in a PUD, but meets the lot requirements of the R-0 zoning district. There is another subdivision a little further south that is zoned R-1. Ms. Lynn referenced the goals of the Fairfield Forward Comprehensive Plan and discussed how infill lots should be developed to be compatible with the surrounding homes and with the general characteristics of the neighborhood. The existing residential areas should be protected and preserved, and she asked the Commission to consider whether the surrounding half acre to acre lots will be negatively impacted by the smaller lot sizes that the applicant is proposing in this subdivision. A large amount of existing vegetation was removed over the summer, which was a concern to staff. The comprehensive plan states that mature trees should be preserved and replaced if they are removed. A proposed condition of approval includes a tree planting plan. The setbacks for various zoning districts were discussed. The proposed subdivision lots range from 7,900 – 13,000 square feet. The lots are shallow and wide resulting in the rear yard setback only being 15 feet, which is half of the R-0 and R-1 rear yard setback requirements. The rear yards of the proposed lots will not be large enough for any type of accessory structure. The proposed detention basin will be located on the open space lot. Ms. Lynn stated that the open space lot is not a requirement in the R-0 zoning district, but PUDs often have open space lots to offset the smaller lot sizes. She also stated the applicant should indicate how the open space lot is going to be used. Code requires a sidewalk along Pleasant Avenue; there is not one shown on the site plan. There are currently no sidewalks along

Pleasant Avenue north or south of the proposed subdivision. A sidewalk waiver may be requested by the applicant. Ms. Lynn noted that a couple years ago, the city adopted a connectivity plan called Fairfield Connects, which is a plan to improve non-motorized transportation throughout the city. For this area, the plan calls for a 5-foot sidewalk on the east side of Pleasant Ave. and a multi-use trail on the west side of Pleasant Ave., because of the proximity to Harbin Park.

Ms. Lynn stated that at the public hearing, the two main issues that were discussed were drainage and traffic safety. The City Engineer drafted a memo to discuss these concerns and provide recommendations for Planning Commission to consider. Most of the proposed lots will drain north to the street and to the detention basin. The three lots located in the cul-de-sac appear to have the potential to shed stormwater onto adjacent properties. These lots will need to capture stormwater onsite and route it through the basin. Two options presented by the City Engineer to accomplish this are to pipe downspouts and sump drains to the storm system and to construct a combination of rear yard swales and storm sewers. With regard to traffic safety, the City Engineer provided information from a 2019 ODOT traffic count, showing approximately 24,000 vehicles per day in this area of Pleasant Ave. The proposed subdivision is expected to generate 64-88 trips per day and will have a minimal impact to congestion in the vicinity. From 2017-2019, along the stretch of Pleasant Ave. between Resor and Calumet, there were 17 crashes; 16 of them rear end collisions, with 13 of those occurring in the northbound direction approaching the Resor Rd. intersection. Two recommendations were proposed to alleviate the potential of additional accidents: A 50-foot southbound left turn lane into the development and a northbound right turn lane into the subdivision. It was noted that the city has designed and secured funding for a widening project at Calumet Way to add a left turn lane into Calumet Way.

Mr. Medler asked if this type of housing was needed in Fairfield. Ms. Lynn stated that feedback from the Comprehensive Plan update indicated that housing for empty nesters and young professionals was in demand and desired, including lots with smaller yards and less maintenance. One of the goals from the comprehensive plan is to provide a range of housing types to allow people to remain in Fairfield across different life cycle stages. This development appears to satisfy that goal, with smaller lots and an HOA to maintain the lots.

Examples of elevations from Ashford Homes, a regional home builder in the Cincinnati area, were shown. The sizes of the two-story elevations provided range from 2000-2800 square feet, while the ranch elevations are over 1800 square feet. Ms. Lynn stated that some of the lot configurations limits the floor plans. Those homes may need to be custom designed. Mr. Kathman said he was interested to hear what type of relationship the applicant has with Ashford Homes. Ms. Ritchie asked how many homes would fit on the property if they met the R-0 zoning district requirements. Ms. Lynn stated that per a study done a few years ago by staff, 3-4 homes could fit, meeting the setback requirements. Mr. Davidson asked how the lot sizes in this subdivision compare to the Olde Winton Subdivision. Ms. Lynn responded that the Olde Winton Subdivision has the smallest lots in Fairfield, with 3000-4000 square foot lots. John Clemmons, Law Director, stated that in these small subdivisions, the detention basin lots often become "orphan lots" since they are owned by the HOA. They need to make sure the HOA will maintain the lot properly. Having the detention basin attached to a lot with a house would help to alleviate

that problem because someone would be accountable for the maintenance of the basin.

Tony Marshall, applicant, was in attendance. He stated that he has owned the property for two years. The property had been neglected; but he saw the potential and has rehabbed the inside of the existing house. He has received some infrastructure bids from contractors and is aware of the budget involved. Regarding Ashford Homes, he stated that he personally does not have a relationship with them, but his developer Duke Ball has done work for Ashford. Mr. Marshall said that he and Ashford have an understanding that he can use their floor plans. Mr. Lepsky asked if the developer has a track record and asked for some projects that he has done that the Commission could review. Mr. Marshall said that the developer does a lot of redevelopment. The home price points were discussed. Mr. Marshall said the price point will be around \$400,000. Mr. Lepsky asked why he cleared the lot before he got approval for the subdivision. Mr. Marshall stated that he has family that lives on the property. There were a lot of old trees on the property, and a large tree fell during a storm. After that happened, he cleared the lot for safety purposes. He said he is willing to plant some new trees. Ms. Lynn asked how he intends to use the open space lot for "community gatherings". He stated that he has two ideas; either a monument or a dog park. Regarding the accident reports discussed earlier, he said that none of the accidents were near his property; most were in front of Calumet Way. Ms. Ritchie asked if he will be ready to start construction within one year if the concept plan is approved. Mr. Marshall said he is ready to start. He said he appreciates Development Services staff helping to get him to this point; he has received a lot of information from them.

Olusegun Akomolede, Mr. Marshall's civil engineer, was in attendance. He said he performed the survey of the property and has already designed the grade of the lots. He initially planned to include two detention basins, with the additional basin in the northeast corner with a retaining wall, but the city did not like that design. The right turn lane is not included in the rough estimate for infrastructure and may kill the project. 5 feet sidewalks are already included around the entire street and cul-de-sac. He said he agreed that some of the homes will need to be custom designed because of the size of the lots and the topography. He is not an architect and will not be designing the actual homes. They intend to bring in an architect later in the process. Mr. Lepsky stated that he has concerns about a house fitting into the building envelope, especially a one-story home. Mr. Akomolede said various sized houses could fit on the lots. Ms. Ritchie said that with the setbacks and lot sizes she does not think the houses at the \$400,000 price point are possible. Mr. Lepsky said he should speak to an architect to actually show the homes on the individual lots. Lee Rosato, Building Official, provided a sketch to scale of the site with houses superimposed on the individual lots to give them an idea of what would fit. Some of the houses do not fit into the building envelope. The sidewalk along Pleasant Ave. was discussed. The Commission discussed the merits of installing the sidewalk with this project versus waiving the sidewalk requirement for safety's sake. There are no other sidewalks on this side of Pleasant Ave. and constructing one just for this project may be unsafe, as it may encourage people to cross Pleasant Ave. at this location.

Danny Vanderpool, 1769 Resor Rd., was in attendance. He stated that this project will impact his property more than anyone else, as his house will face the back of the three homes in the cul-de-sac. When he purchased his home in 2005, he talked to the city and was informed the

zoning would not support any type of development at this location. He was not aware that the zoning could be changed to allow a subdivision. He was forced to retire early due to a disability, and he was looking forward to spending time out on his deck and enjoying the pristine view that includes a lot of various wildlife. He asked what can be done to stop the project at this point. He was encouraged to attend meetings and bring like-minded neighbors.

Kassia Cristello, 313 Cog Hill Dr., was in attendance. She asked why the city would approve this project. Mr. Kathman explained that anyone who owns property can petition to change the zoning of the property. The city must accept applications. No changes have been made yet. Ms. Cristello said she hopes the city does not approve the project.

Bert Huffer, 5963 Emerald Lake Dr., was in attendance. He said he is concerned about the safety of the cars making left hand turns out of the subdivision. He said those wouldn't be rear end collisions, but they would be side impact collisions. He showed the Commission pictures of an accident that occurred in that area. He stated he is also concerned about water drainage. He said even though Emerald Lake has the retention pond, some of the drainage moves across the street to the area of the proposed subdivision. Additional pavement and development will make the water flow faster. Mr. Lepsky said drainage is well regulated by the city. Ms. Lynn explained the difference between a retention and detention pond. Retention ponds always hold water. Detention ponds are generally dry, but catch water during heavy rain events and slowly release it into the ground.

Tony Bales, 5874 Pleasant Ave., was in attendance. He is concerned about another road between Calumet Way and Resor Rd. There are already a lot of accidents in that area.

Richard Carr, 1751 Resor Rd., was in attendance. He said there are two creeks; one from across Emerald Lake and one that runs through the subject property. When there is a lot of rain the property floods. He stated that traffic during rush hour and left turns are very difficult. Traffic backs up as well. He is not against progress, but has concerns about wildlife and doesn't want to look into other back yards.

Mr. Lepsky stated that he doesn't think the applicant is at a point to move forward. More discussion is necessary. Mr. Kathman said the major concerns are house layouts, configuration, and size. An architect actually needs to place the houses on the lots. The drainage plan for the cul-de-sac lots need to be finalized to be sure to mitigate flooding to surrounding properties. Ms. Ritchie asked if parking on the street was proposed, since the driveways would be so short. Ms. Lynn said the street has to be built to public standard, which includes parking. The timeline of the PUD process was discussed.

Scott Lepsky, seconded by Matt Davidson, motioned to table the request. Motion carried 5-0.

REPORTS/STUDIES/GENERAL DISCUSSION

Gwen Ritchie reported that the Parks Board has two positions open; the 1st Ward and 4th Ward. Interviews will be held late February-early March.

Matt Davidson reported that three new councilmembers, including himself, were sworn in at the last council meeting. A new city manager was hired and the fire levy was discussed.

Greg Kathman reported that Zoning Inspector Jeff Timpe was promoted to the open Code Enforcement Supervisor position. Mr. Timpe has been with the city over 4 years and is an Army veteran who served in Iraq. The open Zoning Inspector position will be filled this spring.

Motion to adjourn carried unanimously.

Scott Lepsky, Chairman

Lynda McGuire, Secretary