

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MINUTES
City of Geneva
109 James Street - City Council Chambers

March 12, 2020 – Meeting #11

Chairman Stocking called the meeting of the Geneva Planning and Zoning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call followed:

Present: Chairman Stocking; Commissioners Kosirog, Mead, Slifka

Absent: Commissioners Evans, Rittenhouse, Elsburg

Staff Present: Community Development Director David DeGroot, City Planner Paul Evans, City Atty. Ron Sandack

Public Present: Mr. Chuck Miles, 1015 Westfield Course; Stephanie LaBlanc, 2825 Caldwell Lane; Louise Petryniec, 2883 Old Mill Court; Lane Allan, 215 Fulton Street; Margo Hoovel, 2809 Caldwell Lane; Joe Ryan, 2544 Heritage Court, Chuck Cook, 2511 Walnut Ave.; Andrea White, 2527 Walnut Ave.; Anna & Zachary Frazier, 780 Lewis Rd.; Bill Malone 742 Lewis Rd.; ___ B. 2567 Walnut Ave.; Jerry & Angie Praitville, 3397 Osprey Ct.; Tim & Janice Juenke, 2519 Walnut Ave. Che Clark, 2802 Spruce Ct.; Billy Malecky, 121 Woodlawn St.; Karen & Brian Runowski, 2808 Spruce Ct.; Mark Byzanis, 967 Lewis Rd.; Jennie Christalos, 2864 Spruce Ct.; John Bowe, 3316 Osprey Ct.; Lindsey McCall, 2732 Peterson Ct.; Chris Szohner, 2716 Peterson Ct.; Dan Havlan, 2679 Cedar Ave., Mike Kaiser, 2882 Caldwell Ln.; Kevin and Mary Scherschel, 2657 Cedar Ave.; Maureen McKeough; 1568 Kirkwood Dr.; Mark Alexander, 2740 Peterson Ct.; Karen Fitzsimon, 2740 Peterson Ct.; Lauren Souer, 2643 Danford; Jared Long; Recording Secretary Celeste Weilandt

Approval of the Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Kosirog, second by Commissioner Slifka to approve the agenda. Motion passed by voice vote of 4-0.

Approval of February 27, 2020 Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Kosirog to approve the February 27, 2020 minutes, as presented. Second by Commissioner Slifka. Motion passed by voice vote of 4-0.

Concept Review

A. Emma's Landing – Conceptual review of a 45-unit affordable rental housing development. The concept would require a Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment, Planned Unit Development Amendment and Site Plan Approval. *Location:* North of Lewis Road, east of Wood Avenue. *Applicant:* Tracey Manning with the Burton Foundation.

Chairman Stocking read the meeting's protocol for a concept review.

Ms. Tracy Manning, with the Burton Foundation, 2090 Larkin Ave., Elgin, IL reviewed the proposal for a 45-unit townhome development consisting of 15 two-bedroom units and 30 three-bedroom units with 80% of the area median income for 15 of the units and the balance at 60% of the area median or less. Income rates for the project followed, as well as square footage. The tenant would pay the heat and electric while the owner would pay water, sewer and trash removal. An on-site third-party management company would manage the project. Per Ms. Manning the development will be a no-tolerance, high-quality development, with tight restrictions that are placed on the lessees.

Responding to Commissioner Mead's question regarding a certain income percentage for the development, Ms. Manning explained that she prefers not to see tenants have income to housing over 40% to 42% in order to pay for utilities, insurance, vehicle, etc. As for the upkeep and maintenance of the site, Ms. Manning discussed that replacement reserves, insurance and taxes are funded upfront that include monthly payments made into the reserves. She described the work that would be performed monthly and annually at the buildings. The buildings would be green (environmental efficient). Mowing and snow removal would be outsourced and a maintenance person would be responsible for the upkeep of the entire development.

Architect for the project, Mr. Lane Allan with Allen and Pepa Architects, 215 Fulton Street, Geneva, reviewed the elevations and materials for the proposed four-unit and three-unit buildings on the overhead. The ADA-compliant buildings would be durable, energy efficient, incorporate a 6/12 roof pitch with life-time shingles, and have no basements. Exterior color and material details followed as well as interior layouts. The party walls between the units would be concrete block. Building elevations and a brief description of the landscaping plan followed.

Commissioner Mead suggested that when the applicant brings the project forward next time to highlight that handicap accessibility is at a minimum with extra benefits that are further accessible.

Ms. Manning returned, explaining that the referenced crescent-shaped land located between Lewis Road and the referenced property was owned by The Sterling Manor Home Owners Association (Sterling HOA). The Foundation, however, was seeking an easement on the north and south sides to keep the open space and have a separation between the development and the street. The applicant was asked whether the Foundation explored other townhome layouts since the rear of the townhomes faced the street and people tended to collect items in the back of their homes.

Since the site was raised about eight feet above the street level, Commissioner Mead suggested the applicant return and focus on the significant landscaping that will be incorporated into the project. As mentioned by Ms. Manning, outside storage, such as bikes, grills etc. would not be allowed. As pointed out by Commissioner Mead, the nearby existing townhomes had their back sides exposed to Lewis Road.

Mr. Lou Wurstbaum, Civil and Environmental Consultants, 1230 Eastdale Road, Naperville reviewed the site plan in detail as it pertained to access points, water service, and storm water detention (existing basin to be expanded with wetland treatment for BMP). Currently, there was no fence around the detention pond and there was no fence being proposed with the proposal.

Commissioner Mead questioned staff about a parcel located south/southeast of the site that was county-owned. Mead believed it could be used as another access point, if necessary.

Chairman Stocking opened up public comment.

Public Comment

Mr. Chuck Miles, 1015 Westfield Course, appreciated the commission looking at this affordable housing project. For the public's sake, he explained some of the history of how the affordable housing topic came about. He discussed his involvement with the applicant, Ms. Manning, and some of the other developments that involved her.

Ms. Stephanie LeBlanc, 2825 Caldwell Lane, stated her townhome backyard will face the development. Her concerns included: land being taken away from native animals, endangered birds,

and open space. The railroad had already removed trees. She expressed concern as to who would be paying for the students coming into the development.

Ms. Louise Petryniec, 2883 Old Mill Court, asked for clarification of the water run-off drainage issue and expressed her concern about the pond overflowing during hard rains.

Mr. Wurstbaum explained that the run-off will go into the existing basin located west of the site. While he could not tell how much of the pond would be expanded, he stated it would be according to the Kane County ordinance.

Ms. Louise Petryniec returned and asked for clarification of the basin's expansion, wherein Mr. Wurstbaum responded that the eastern edge of the pond will be expanded to provide additional volume as needed for the new impervious area that was being added. Ms. Petryniec voiced concern whether the additional maintenance costs would be shared between the new development and the townhome association. (Chairman Stocking indicated it was part of the agreement.)

Ms. Margo Hoovel, 2809 Caldwell Lane, faced the pond and voiced concern about the lack of openness for the development, the railroad noise (third track), children's safety, and policing the development's neatness. She asked that the City look into the impact of the third rail on the development. Other concerns included visitor parking and water pollution run-off.

Mr. Joseph Ryan, 2544 Heritage Court, voiced concern about increased water run-off, the development's density, asked to define areas of income, and roadway encroachment. He recommended relocating the roadway to the south end off of Kaneville Road.

Mr. Andrew White, 2527 Walnut Ave., stated his property will back up against the development. While he supports affordable housing, he voiced concern about run-off to the pond, loss of wildlife, loss of openness that the residents currently use, and traffic.

Ms. Anna Frazier, 780 Lewis Road, did not appreciate a comment by the petitioner's architect. She also found concern about road safety, stop signs, student safety and the fact that there were negative comments on-line from residents who reside or previously lived in other Burton Foundation developments.

Mr. Zack Frazier, 780 Lewis Road, voiced concern about safety, increased traffic, and the aesthetics of the property. He wanted to hear about the development's landscaping details.

Mr. Bill Malone, 764 Lewis Road, shared concerns about increased traffic and occupancy requirements. (Ms. Manning responded to the occupancy question.)

Ms. Janice Juenke, 2519 Walnut, stated the townhome association owns the 20-foot setback (crescent). She shared her concerns about additional traffic along Fargo Boulevard and Lewis Road and its impact on the police department. She discussed the current deterioration of Kaneville Road in general due to heavy traffic. She voiced concern when the proposed buildings will need new roofs, how residents were chosen for the development, and how the police would be impacted.

Mr. Billy McCally, 121 Woodlawn Street, sits on the City's SPAC and asked if the applicant was seeking LEED certification, whether the development will reach the City's goal for affordable housing, and mentioned a precedent already existed nearby with backyards facing the street.

Ms. Karen Runowski, 2808 Spruce Court, asked about the original intention of the property which Director DeGroot confirmed was for the water treatment facility originally. Ms. Runowski confirmed the site under discussion was still owned by the City of Geneva but, as explained by

Dir. DeGroot explained, the property was rezoned and the PUD was amended to allow for townhomes or condominiums with a maximum of 50 units. Ms. Runowski noted the negative reviews that come with affordable housing, specifically the depreciated real estate value. She voiced concerns as to: who pays the property taxes, what would be the impact to police and fire safety, and who would maintain the road (City would). She recommended the petitioner revisit its stormwater calculation and asked that the neighbors be included in future discussions. Ms. Runowski further inquired what other sites were being considered for affordable housing in Geneva, where she could find the information on the City's web site, and whether the development would be considered for senior housing.

Mr. Mark Byers, 967 Lewis, emphasized that the intersection of Lewis and Fargo could not handle the traffic, vehicles sped along Lewis Road with no regard for his children's safety, and the current retention pond and rain run-off in the overall area was a concern.

Ms. Jennie Christakos, 2864 Spruce Court, voiced concern about the maximum number of pets per unit allowed in the development, if vaccinations were required, and fecal matter being picked up. She voiced concern about dog attacks on other dogs and children especially due to pets being pent up in small spaces. She had concerns about increased traffic, the high number of traffic accidents reported at Randall Road and Fargo Blvd., and the number of parking spaces allowed for visitors.

Mr. John Bowe, 3316 Osprey Court, recollected the last time he was before the commission speaking on traffic Lewis Road. He voiced concerns about increased traffic on Lewis, safety near the park and bike safety.

Ms. Lindsey McCall, 2732 Peterson Court, said she moved from Chicago due to living next to an affordable housing project. She voiced concern about the proposed project, the safety of her children, the crime rate associated with affordable housing, and decreased housing values. She inquired about the median value of the homes surrounding the Water's Edge development. Ms. McCall presented a packet of petitions signed by homeowners who opposed the proposed project.

Mr. Chris Bonner, 2716 Peterson Court, also moved from the City of Chicago and then moved to Geneva. He voiced concern about traffic, the safety of children, and the development's impact on police resources. He was surprised that the applicant did not market more towards families and inquired if the City was planning to increase the existing park.

Mr. Dan Hanlon, 2679 Cedar Avenue, referring to the playground, asked whether the developer would be providing a cash donation or land donation, suggested to remove the park and remove a couple of the buildings to provide more space, asked if the leases would be reviewed by the City, and voiced concern about parking and its enforcement. He asked that a parking study be done to include Fargo Blvd. and Randall Road since vehicles backed up to the fire station on Fargo Blvd. Mr. Hanson asked if the developer has done a market study regarding the rent that can be obtained. He did not see a dedicated recycling area on the plans, asked if there was an independent trash company for trash pickup; and would residents' guests have stickers for residential parkin. He asked if the detention pond was extended out would the pond's water level drop.

Mr. Mark Alexander, 2740 Peterson Court, voiced concern on the notification process to the neighborhood, the development's environmental impact, the real estate impact, and increased traffic. He felt the community was blind-sided, asked for empathy, and asked the commissioners whether the site was the best place for rental housing.

Ms. Karen Fitzsimmons, 2740 Peterson Court, shared her experience as a mortgage professional and shared what she has seen with affordable rental properties, including: crime, third-party management companies, unsupervised children, safety, and no walkability since some people will not own vehicles. She asked to reconsider the development's location closer to stores and schools.

Ms. Brittany Grupp (phonetic), 80 Westhaven Circle, returned to Geneva to raise her three children. She reported that Batavia had four affordable housing locations from a Google search and referenced crime statistic differences between the Cities of Geneva and Batavia. She asked the City to look at affordable housing as a whole and whether the third-party management company would be screening potential applicants for drug offenses, criminal backgrounds, whether they shared the similar values of the community, and the development's impact on the school system.

Mr. Steve Hernandez, 2887 Old Mill Court, stated he was president of the Sterling Manor Townhome Association, as of October 2019. He reviewed some of the facts about the development, including that he has been in communication with the City of Geneva and The Burton Foundation. He relayed that the existing ponds and 20-foot crescent were owned by the townhome association and the fact that he would be notifying the residents of Sterling Manor about an upcoming community meeting. To date, there were no agreements with the Burton Foundation.

Ms. Stephanie Stewart, 2923 Caldwell Lane, came here from the East Coast and talked about the overall safe community of Geneva. While she agreed affordable housing is needed, she discussed first-hand some of the renting issues she saw at the nearby townhomes: threatening individuals, parties, evictions, and police activity, which was not a positive. She questioned if she would receive the same lack of respect from this development. Ms. Stewart reminded the commissioners that rental units existed in Brittany Court, Pepper Valley, Mill Creek, etc. and recommended using some of those vacant units as affordable housing for the City rather than building a new development.

Ms. Maureen McKeogh, 1568 Kirkwood Drive, was on the Affordable Housing Taskforce in 2014 and talked about the City's goal to create more diversified housing stock. She encouraged those in attendance to consider not making prejudgments about those living in affordable housing and to rely on facts. Lastly, she reminded the commissioners that those individuals who will live in the units were not present to present their case.

Mr. Chuck Cook, 2511 Walnut Ave., supported the comments being made but voiced concern how maintenance of the buildings would take place given the low rents.

Hearing no further comments, the Chairman invited those in attendance to voice additional comments.

Ms. Margo Hoovel, 2809 Caldwell Lane, reiterated her concern about the railroad's third track, children's safety with the train being so near, and the ponds. She supported affordable housing but not in the proposed location.

Mr. Mark Byers, 9670 _____, discussed the difference between affordable housing – constructing small homes for seniors, versus subsidized housing. He believed the matter was relative and that many residents in the community supported housing that was affordable but were against this particular “brand” of affordable housing.

[A resident provide copies of signed petitions to the Chairman. Chairman Stocking explained that all petitions should be brought up during the public hearing for the actual proposal.]

A resident voiced that it was unfair for subsidized housing to be placed in her neighborhood, seeing that she was paying \$11,000 in taxes. She expressed concern about the development disrupting the ecosystem of the existing pond. She asked staff if the property was sold to the Burton Foundation, wherein Director DeGroot indicated it was not. However, she pointed out there were civil engineers at the site with various pink flags located on the property. The resident asked how the tenants are chosen to live in the development.

Ms. Karen Fitzsimmons, 2740 Peterson Court inquired about an access easement to the property. She further inquired how the site would have been accessed when it was considered for the water facility, to which Director DeGroot followed-up. The chairman directed her to visit the County's web site for any further land records.

Ms. Tracy Manning returned with her responses: The rents that are set are not reduced; 83% of the residents that live in their development come from the same community and are marketed in the same community. As for roof reserves, it is capitalized at the closing and money is set aside monthly to pay for roof expenses. Regarding the railroad track, a berm will be installed. Also there is a goal to install a fence near the basin and train tracks. Per Ms. Manning, The Burton Foundation pays the development's standard real estate taxes or \$137,000 per year.

Ms. Manning shared her comments regarding the negative social media comments. She further stated the development is funded with private equity from investment companies such as Walt Disney, Chase, PNC Bank, Bank of America, Raymond James, etc. and was not a Section 8 property. Details followed. As for a development's impact on assessments, Ms. Manning discussed that property values for homes next to Water's Edge had increased. While a No Pet policy existed, tenants with comfort dogs were allowed once proof of identification, photo and medical shots of the animal were provided.

Next, Ms. Manning reported a full-time position exists for managing on-site issues. Proposed were 18 guest parking spaces distributed throughout development. Plans were to market to the Geneva community first and then fan out. Responses to earlier questions followed. Lastly, Ms. Manning discussed the Illinois Housing Authority and its role in the proposed development.

Chairman Stocking opened up the matter to commissioner comments.

Commissioner Mead recommended to Ms. Manning that her traffic study focus on the development's impact to the Fargo area, mention management's presence on the site, how it will be managed, and be ready to address comments about crime, property value, water run-off / engineering, the impact on schools and parks, and define the capital maintenance fund. Commissioner Kosirog encouraged the City to set up a web site for affordable housing for the residents to follow and Commissioner Slifka asked that the petitioner be factual with its answers.

Other Business - None

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:51 p.m. on motion by Commissioner Kosirog. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote of 4-0.