

**MINUTES
TOWN OF FORT MILL
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
July 21, 2020**

Virtual Meeting

**Live Viewing Online: Request Access by emailing before 5:00 pm on Tuesday, July 21st, 2020 to
Penelope G. Karagounis, Planning Director at pkaragounis@fortmillsc.gov
Public Access by Phone: Dial (toll free) 1-877-309-2073
and use access code 136-060-525**

AGENDA

6:30 PM

- Present: James Traynor, Hynek Lettang, Matthew Lucarelli, Dan Stout, Chris Wolfe, Planning Director Penelope Karagounis, and Senior Planner Alex Moore
- Guests: Philip Hayes (Land Development Resources), Nick Bushon (Design Resource Group), Nicole Gaunt (Citizen) and Jamie Rose (Citizen)
- Absent: Andy Agrawal and Ben Hudgins

Chairman Traynor called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Chairman Traynor gave opportunity to the Planning Commission to review and comment on the May 19th, 2020 meeting minutes as presented within the meeting packet. There being no discussion, Chairman Traynor asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Chris Wolfe made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Hynek Lettang seconded the motion. By a vote of 5-0, the Planning Commission approved the May 19th, 2020 meeting minutes.

Chairman Traynor gave opportunity to the Planning Commission to review and comment on the June 16th, 2020 meeting minutes as presented within the meeting packet. There being no discussion, Chairman Traynor asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Chris Wolfe made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Hynek Lettang seconded the motion. By a vote of 5-0, the Planning Commission approved the June 16th, 2020 meeting minutes.

Chairman Traynor then invited the respective guests attending the meeting virtually to introduce themselves:

- Jamie Rose – 811 Savannah Place Drive, Fort Mill, SC 29715

Planning Director Penelope Karagounis then introduced the applicant for the new business item on the agenda along with his design professional:

- Philip Hayes of Land Development Resources

- Nick Bushon of Design Resource Group

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Sketch Plan: West Hensley Road Subdivision

Senior Planner Moore introduced the subdivision sketch plan for the proposed project on W. Hensley Road. The property is located on the north side of W. Hensley Road. It is located \pm 548 feet from N. Doby's Bridge Road and \pm 1,770 feet from Fort Mill Parkway.

Moore stated that the property consists of \pm 8.2 acres and is currently comprised of 4 parcels of property. The adjacent zoning districts include R-15 (Town of Fort Mill), RC-I (York County), and RD-I (York County). The sketch plan review is the first of several review stages in the Town of Fort Mill process.

In addition to the sketch plan, these include the preliminary plat review, civil construction plan review, and final plat review. With the sketch plan review, we are looking at the basic components of this project. The entirety of this project area is zoned R-5. It should be noted that the R-5 zoning designation is a legacy district. This means that no such new district can be added to the official zoning map. Also, the boundaries of an existing legacy district cannot be expanded.

The minimum allowed lot size within this proposed project is 5,000 square feet. An exterior buffer, 35' in width, is required along the perimeter of this project. The applicant does have the option, per the zoning ordinance, of reducing this buffer by 25% provided that a 6-foot tall opaque wall is constructed upon the project boundary, adjacent to the area which is reduced.

Moore then noted that while the minimum 20% open space requirement is met, we would like to see such areas "amenitized". This could include a usable trail-system within the buffer areas connecting to an exercise area in the vicinity of the pond.

Any tree on the property that is 30" or greater in diameter at 4.5' from the ground will need to either be saved or mitigated. Such a tree can be mitigated with two, like-species, 3" caliper trees. So, this plan indicates 24 single-family lots for an overall project density of 2.92 DU/AC. The R-5 Zoning District allows a max density of 3 DU/AC.

It is anticipated that this will be an age-restricted residential subdivision. Our Zoning Ordinance requires a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) when a project is expected to generate 400 daily trips or 100 or more peak-hour trips. So, with this project we instead have a Transportation Technical Memorandum (TTM) because the projected trips fall below this. This is summarized in Table 1 within the TTM and indicates that the site is expected to generate 280 daily trips, along with 22 AM Peak Hour Trips and 26 PM Peak Hour Trips.

Moore then briefly discussed the likely outcomes of the project if it became age restricted. This could have the potential of a 42% overall reduction from that at 162 daily trips, along

with 14 AM peak trips, and 16 PM trips. The TTM did note the existence of driveways near the proposed project. SCDOT is aware of this as well. However, they seem to be generally amenable to the project if the existing 12' wide access easement to the west of the project is removed.

Moore then opened the floor to questions.

Planning Commission member Chris Wolfe questioned the validity of the R-5 zoning designation for the project area. He noted his belief that the Town's intention was to eliminate R-5 zoning.

Planning Director Penelope Karagounis clarified that the project area was indeed R-5 and thus, it was considered a legacy zoning district. This means that in the Town of Fort Mill, existing R-5 zoning districts cannot be expanded and that new R-5 zoning districts cannot be created.

Chris Wolfe noted that the existing R-5 zoning was still problematic due to it being the basis of the current proposal, which in his view, resulted in a project with little benefit to the town or to its future residents. His general feeling was that the sketch plan communicated a desire for maximized density while delivering negligible benefits due to a lack of usable open space.

Chairman Traynor echoed Planning Commissioner Wolfe's thoughts on the plan.

Philip Hayes, the applicant, then interjected that it was his intent to include usable open space within the project. Mr. Hayes stated that the project would indeed be age restricted to facilitate the large demand for such housing within this real estate market.

Returning to the subject of open space, Mr. Hayes noted the existing pond on the property as illustrated on the submitted sketch plan. He stated that behind the pond and in within this general section of the project that a small community amenity would be constructed. This would likely include a gazebo, a firepit, an area for grilling out, picnic tables/benches, along with a walking trail from this section of the project, along the existing creek, back toward the front of the property. Here there might be some type of secondary amenity near the mail kiosk.

Chairman Traynor noted that this proposal sounded interesting and stated that the subsequent preliminary plan would allow for these ideas be fleshed out and revealed in more detail.

Chairman Traynor noted to the guests attending the virtual meeting that the preliminary plat would come back before Planning Commission at another public meeting.

Planning Commission member Matthew Lucarelli then spoke on the project. He noted that generally he was in favor of such use-by-right development as had been presented on the sketch plan. It meets the intent of the zoning ordinance. However, Mr. Lucarelli also stated that there should be a measure of care taken by the developer on this project. Specifically, Mr. Lucarelli

noted that the plan left the impression of maximum lot-yield rather than designing with the existing natural elements of the property in mind. In this regard, he noted that lot number 7 as indicated on the sketch plan, if removed, would add a great deal of open space character within the project.

Planning Commissioner Hynek Lettang agreed with Mr. Lucarelli and noted that this was a great suggestion and that he would support such a proposal to use the area comprising lot 7 as open space.

Planning Director Penelope Karagounis then stated that before one of the citizen guests spoke, she would like to give all the Planning Commissioners an opportunity to speak and ask questions.

Chairman Traynor then asked Planning Commission members if they had any further questions or comments on the sketch plan as presented.

Planning Commission member Chris Wolfe then asked Senior Planner Alex Moore if he had been able to have preliminary discussion with the fire marshal on the ability of emergency vehicles to maneuver in and out of the project.

Moore stated that there had been no comments generated by the fire marshal on the cul-de-sacs. Additionally, he noted that the cul-de-sacs as presented represented the standard town approved design. He recommended that the applicant include an exhibit in the preliminary plat-set illustrating that emergency vehicles can navigate the cul-de-sacs as designed.

Chairman Traynor then asked if there would be landscaping material within the center of the cul-de-sacs.

Mr. Hayes responded that the center of the cul-de-sacs would be landscaped.

Planning Commission member Dan Stout then asked what the distance was between lot number 7 and the existing pond as shown on the sketch plan.

Mr. Hayes noted that the pond was a natural pond that was essentially fed via runoff from the site. He stated that he was not sure at this juncture how this would continue, whether by an artificial water source or by natural flow.

Senior Planner Moore then stated that the distance from the pond to lot 7 was approximately nine feet at the shortest point.

Planning Commissioner Chris Wolfe then asked Moore about the requirement of sidewalk within the project and if these were located within the right-of-way.

Moore stated that sidewalks were shown on both sides of the internal streets as required and that the sidewalks were principally located within the right-of-way except for within the cul-de-sacs. He noted that those portions of the sidewalk located on private lots would require an easement.

Planning Commissioner Hynek Lettang then asked what the proposed price point for the homes would be.

Mr. Hayes said that he had not established who the builder would be but estimated that the price point would be \$350,000 to \$375,000.

Planning Commission member Matthew Lucarelli then asked about the existing 12' wide access easement located near the proposed ingress/egress point at W. Hensley Road as denoted on the sketch plan. He expressed concern to Senior Planner Moore about potential conflicts with the main project drive.

Moore stated that he believed that planning staff would prefer for this 12' wide access easement to be removed. He then asked Mr. Hayes if this would be possible.

Mr. Hayes stated that they could potentially relocate the driveway from the current location and connect it perpendicularly into the main project road.

Planning Commission member Matthew Lucarelli clarified that his preference would be for this portion of the driveway to be eliminated rather than having it connect back into the main project road as Mr. Hayes described.

Moore asked Mr. Hayes if he could pursue the elimination of this portion of the existing, circular drive.

Mr. Hayes stated that he would indeed pursue this.

Chairman Traynor then asked about the potential cost of the planned low-pressure sewer system for this project.

Mr. Hayes stated that there would be an additional cost of \$7,500 per lot for this system.

Chairman Traynor also noted that there would typically be an annual maintenance fee for this type of system.

Mr. Hayes concurred and noted that the maintenance fee would be part of the HOA payment on the part of homeowners. Additionally, Mr. Hayes stated that his development group had pioneered the use of this type of system within York County in the Lake Wylie area. He went on to explain that with low pressure sewer systems there is typically an annual inspection and annual maintenance. The HOA would be responsible for ensuring these are done.

Planning Commissioner Dan Stout noted that within his development, he has a grinder pump system. However, with his system, it is up to the individual homeowner to schedule inspection and maintenance rather than the HOA.

Chairman Traynor noted his preference for HOA purview of this system.

Planning Commissioner Chris Wolfe then reiterated his desire for this project to lessen its density and upgrade open space components.

Chairman Traynor agreed and stated his desire that the project be adequately buffered with appropriate landscaping.

Mr. Hayes then stated that prior to preliminary plat submittal that they will complete a tree survey of the project site. The survey will delineate those specimens that need to be either saved or mitigated. He noted that this exercise will also identify the existing vegetation that may be used toward achieving the required landscaping within the perimeter buffer.

Chairman Traynor then asked Mr. Hayes if perimeter fencing would be comprised of masonry material as noted within the meeting packet.

Mr. Hayes responded that for the fencing that they would meet the required opacity per the zoning ordinance.

Senior Planner Moore then noted that Mr. Hayes had indicated in a previous response to comments from town staff that the perimeter wall would be masonry.

Mr. Hayes responded that he would need to investigate this further and that perhaps he might not use a wall but rather use only landscaping materials within the buffer. He stated that this would be clarified with his preliminary plat submittal.

Chairman Traynor then stated that if there were no more questions from commission members, that he would now turn the floor over to meeting guests to ask questions.

Jamie Rose then asked about the need for this project to tie into adjoining neighborhoods for water, sewer, or retention ponds.

Senior Planner Moore stated that there would not be any off-site retention ponds for this project. He then asked Mr. Hayes if his team had determined if they would need to tie into utilities within adjacent neighborhoods.

Mr. Hayes said it was his intent to only tie into a low-pressure sewer system owned by the town.

Chairman Traynor then asked if the town had any water and sewer in this vicinity.

Nick Bushon of Design Resource Group then note that there did indeed exist town utilities in the project vicinity. He stated that they had received utility as-builts on the adjacent street to possibly tie into. However, the topography of the property, in that everything flows north to south, did not lend itself to easily tying to existing utilities in the adjacent neighborhood to the east.

Chairman Traynor then asked if commission members had any further questions about the sketch plan as presented.

There being no further questions, Chairman Traynor asked Planning Director Penelope Karagounis how the commission's action on the sketch plan should be stated considering the concerns raised within the meeting. He further indicated that an approval of the sketch would in no way obligate the Planning Commission to approve the subsequent preliminary plat.

Planning Director Karagounis concurred with Chairman Traynor and reiterated that Planning Commission would be seeing a much more detailed preliminary plat that should be addressing the stated concerns.

There being no other questions or comments, Chairman Traynor entertained a motion from Planning Commission members.

Planning Commission member Matthew Lucarelli noted again that the sketch plan complied from a “by-right” standpoint with the R-5 zoning designation. He then prefaced his desire to make a motion to approve the sketch plan with a request that Planning Commission work with Mr. Hayes as a team to determine the best possible solutions to the questions raised at the meeting which included concerns with adequate open space, the existence of the ancillary 12’ driveway from the Snead property, adequate landscaping, etc.

Chairman Traynor concurred with the sentiment as stated by Planning Commissioner Lucarelli. He also noted that the project as presented was a use-by-right but also reiterated that important questions and concerns had been raised by Planning Commission. He stated that he saw this as simply and opportunity for the developer to move forward and come up with answers.

Senior Planner Moore then noted that there would be a 30-day review of the initial preliminary plat submittal by the town and that staff would not bring the project back to Planning Commission until it was corrected.

Planning Commissioner Matthew Lucarelli then made a motion to approve the sketch plan with notation of deficiencies as previously stated, which would be addressed at preliminary plat submittal.

Planning Commissioner Dan Stout seconded the motion.

The Planning Commission then voted 5-0 to approve the sketch plan as noted within the motion.

Mr. Hayes then expressed his thanks to Planning Commission.

Chairman Traynor then formally welcomed Planning Commissioner Dan Stout to the board as this was his first meeting.

Planning Commissioner Stout stated that he was glad to be involved.

There being no other business, Chairman Traynor adjourned the meeting at 7:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted
Alex J. Moore, AICP
Senior Planner
August 5th, 2020