

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES - CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS

Tuesday, May 20, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.
City Hall Chambers - 8150 Barbara Avenue

Chair Hark called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Paul Hark
Pat Simon
Tony Scales
Armando Lissarrague
Annette Maggi
Bill Klein
Dennis Wippermann
Harold Gooch

Commissioners Absent: Victoria Elsmore (excused)

Others Present: Allan Hunting, City Planner

GREGORY MICHAEL DAMIANI – CASE NO. 14-16CV

Reading of Notice

Commissioner Simon read the public hearing notice to consider the request for a conditional use permit to allow sheet metal siding on an accessory building in the E-1, Estate Residential zoning district, and a variance to allow a 2,200 square foot accessory building whereas 1,600 square feet is the maximum size allowed, for the property located at 8709 Ann Marie Trail. 43 notices were mailed.

Presentation of Request

Allan Hunting, City Planner, explained the request as detailed in the report. He advised that the applicant is allowed one detached accessory structure up to 1,600 square feet in size. The applicant is proposing to add 1,600 square feet onto his existing 600 square foot detached garage, for a total of 2,200 square feet. The applicant is requesting to have corrugated siding on a portion of the building. Sheet metal siding is allowed on accessory buildings in this zoning district by conditional use permit (CUP). Staff recommends denial of the variance for the reasons stated in the report, and approval of the CUP for sheet metal siding for a detached building up to 1,600 square feet in size, with the conditions listed in Alternative A.

Chair Hark asked what size building would be allowed if the lot were five acres or greater.

Mr. Hunting replied up to two structures would be allowed, for a total of 2,400 square feet.

Commissioner Lissarrague asked if staff received any comments from neighbors opposed to the request.

Mr. Hunting replied they received one general inquiry from a neighbor, but no negative comments.

Commissioner Simon asked for clarification of the amount of impervious surface being proposed.

Mr. Hunting advised the applicants were allowed a maximum of 17,869 square feet of impervious surface and were proposing 15,031; thereby complying with code requirements.

Opening of Public Hearing

Gregory Michael Damiani, 1691 East Rose Avenue, St. Paul, advised he was available to answer any questions.

Chair Hark asked if the applicant had read and understood the report.

Mr. Damiani replied in the affirmative. He advised that he has been doing extensive remodeling work on the property since he purchased it in February. His family hopes to move in September 2014. He stated he needs the requested amount of space to store his equipment, such as his 28 foot travel trailer, fish house, boat, etc. He stated that he does triple-towing, which totals 63 feet in length, and he intends to use the natural driveway to pull through since it is difficult to maneuver. He plans to remove a portion of the original driveway and replace it with trees and a berm. He stated the configuration of the property is such that only a quarter section is considered back yard. The new driveway would just be used in the summer and would be made of Class 5 gravel. He showed a rendering of what the home would look like when the remodeling was complete, including a new attached garage. He stated that expanding the size of the proposed attached garage would require the removal of three desirable trees.

Chair Hark asked the applicant if he had spoken with any of the neighbors.

Mr. Damiani replied he had spoken with the property owner directly behind him (who he shared the driveway with) and he had not voiced any concerns. He also spoke with Gary Kaufenberg, who was in the audience tonight.

Chair Hark asked if the applicants planned to move into the house before the full remodel was complete.

Mr. Damiani replied he anticipated a September move-in when the renovation was complete.

Gary Kaufenberg, 8699 Ann Marie Trail, stated he was the neighbor that would be most affected and he was concerned with the size of the proposed building, the amount of power being brought in, and the potential for it to change into a commercial enterprise. He recommended denial of the variance.

Commissioner Lissarrague asked Mr. Kaufenberg if he would be able to see the proposed detached garage in the summertime.

Mr. Kaufenberg replied in the affirmative.

Chair Hark closed the public hearing.

Planning Commission Discussion

Chair Hark stated that although the subject property was larger than the others in the neighborhood and had been sitting vacant for quite some time, he did not see a practical difficulty and he felt the request was more of a convenience.

Commissioner Klein stated he would prefer to vote on the two requests separately.

Planning Commission Recommendation

Motion by Commissioner Klein, second by Commissioner Gooch, to approve the request for a conditional use permit to allow sheet metal siding on an accessory building, with the four conditions listed in the report, for the property located at 8709 Ann Marie Trail.

Motion carried (8/0).

Commissioner Wippermann noted that prior to 2006 only 1,000 square feet was allowed, it was then raised to 1,600 square feet, and the applicant was now requesting an additional 600 square feet. He stated there was a lack of practical difficulty and the request did not meet the variance guidelines.

Commissioner Lissarrague asked if the applicant could gain the requested square footage by building a larger attached garage instead.

Mr. Hunting replied in the affirmative, stating there were no specific size limits for attached garages.

Commissioner Lissarrague stated had a neighbor not come forward in opposition he would have supported the request. In his opinion the practical difficulty was that the owner could build a larger attached garage instead; however, it would require removal of three desirable trees and likely reduce neighboring property values.

Commissioner Scales stated that using that as a practical difficulty could result in many oversized buildings in the City, and therefore he would not support it.

Motion by Commissioner Maggi, second by Commissioner Simon, to deny the request for a variance to allow a 2,200 square foot accessory building whereas 1,600 square feet is the maximum size allowed, based on the lack of a practical difficulty.

Motion carried (8/0). This item goes to the City Council on June 9, 2014.

KURT RECHTZIGEL – CASE NO. 14-14PA

Reading of Notice

Commissioner Simon read the public hearing notice to consider the request for a comprehensive plan amendment to change the land use designation from HDR, High Density Residential to MDR, Medium Density Residential, for the property located at 1407 – 80th Street. 4 notices were mailed.

Presentation of Request

Allan Hunting, City Planner, explained the request as detailed in the report. He advised that the Rehtzigel property abuts the Fox Glen property which was recently approved for a comprehensive plan amendment to an LMDR. The applicant is requesting a comprehensive plan land use change from High Density Residential (HDR) to Medium Density Residential (MDR) for a future proposed townhome development of about 20 units. The property was designated as MDR in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. It was increased in 2010 when the landowners of this property and those to the west and north applied for and received a comprehensive plan amendment to change the property to HDR. The applicant has been working with the Fox Glen developers in regard to stormwater and utilities. The applicant is currently in negotiations with the City in regard to a land swap for the old Schroeder property. Based on current market trends it does not appear likely that higher density residential development would occur at this location, staff feels the townhouse project would provide a good mix of housing, the project meets the projected density for the financial assumptions, and therefore staff recommends approval of the request.

Chair Hark clarified that the only request being considered tonight was the comprehensive plan amendment, and he asked if the project details would come back at a later date.

Mr. Hunting replied that if the comprehensive plan was approved by City Council the applicant would then come back with a preliminary plat and preliminary PUD plan.

Commissioner Wippermann noted that the applicant was using the same development name as an earlier request for single-family lots to the west, and asked if they were two separate groups.

Mr. Hunting replied in the affirmative, stating there were two different ownerships but they would work together regarding grading, utility, and stormwater.

Opening of Public Hearing

Kurt Rehtzigel, 1407 East 80th Street, advised he was available to answer any questions.

Chair Hark asked if the applicant had read and understood the report.

Mr. Rehtzigel replied in the affirmative. He advised that originally there were three separate landowners looking to combine their properties into one parcel and construct a high density townhome development. The market then went soft and the land sat dormant. He is working with the developers of the proposed Fox Glen single-family homes on certain items to make the development work for all parties. He is also working on a land swap with the City for the old Schroeder property.

Commissioner Gooch noted that the neighboring property was recently re-guided for low density residential and he asked if it was the applicant's desire for his property to be low density as well.

Mr. Rehtzigel replied it was not. He advised that he had an existing house and outbuilding on his property which would have to be moved or demolished and, therefore, in order for this to be financially feasible he would have to be able to put 20 units in the development.

Commissioner Gooch asked how many low density lots he could get on his property.

Mr. Rehtzigel replied 5 or 6.

Commissioner Wippermann asked if the applicant would be using the same builders as the single-family section.

Mr. Rehtzigel replied he would not. He advised they would be working together on some items, however, noting that Meridian Land Company would like to install a sewage ejection pump on his property. The land swap between he and the City would allow that to happen. The land swap would also give the City access to the holding pond and infiltration areas for maintenance.

Commissioner Wippermann asked what the approximate price range would be for the townhouses.

Mr. Rehtzigel replied \$200,000-\$250,000. He provided a rendering of the general design of the townhomes, stating they would be multi-level units with two-car garages.

Commissioner Wippermann asked if the townhouses would be owner-occupied.

Mr. Rehtzigel replied in the affirmative, stating they would have individual utility services and would pay association dues to cover maintenance costs.

Commissioner Wippermann questioned if the proposed townhouses would complement the single-family residences going up immediately to the west and whether they would affect property values.

Mr. Rechtzigel replied they would be similar in style and design. He advised that Meridian Land Company gave him permission to use the renderings and they supported his proposal.

Commissioner Lissarrague asked if the townhomes would be two-story on slab.

Mr. Rechtzigel replied they would be multi-level three-bedroom units with daylight windows on the lower level.

Chair Hark closed the public hearing.

Planning Commission Recommendation

Motion by Commissioner Klein, second by Commissioner Scales, to approve the request for a comprehensive plan amendment to change the land use designation from HDR, High Density Residential to MDR, Medium Density Residential, for the property located at 1407 – 80th Street, with the two conditions listed in the report.

Motion carried (8/0). This item goes to the City Council on June 9, 2014.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Hark thanked Victoria Elsmore for her service as a Planning Commissioner.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Fox
Recording Secretary