

**Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting
July 28, 2021
In person and via videoconference
Cedar Falls, Iowa**

MINUTES

The Cedar Falls Planning and Zoning Commission met in regular session on July 28, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall and via videoconference due to precautions necessary to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The following Commission members were present: Holst, Larson, Leeper, Prideaux, Saul, Schrad and Sears. Hartley and Lynch were absent. Karen Howard, Community Services Manager, Thomas Weintraut, Planner III, and Jaydevsinh Atodaria were also present.

- 1.) Chair Leeper noted the Minutes from the July 28, 2021 regular meeting are presented. Ms. Prideaux made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Ms. Saul seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 7 ayes (Holst, Larson, Leeper, Prideaux, Saul, Schrad and Sears), and 0 nays.
- 2.) The first item of business was Land Use Map Amendment from Medium Density Residential to Community Commercial; and Rezoning from A-1: Agricultural District, C-2: Commercial District, and S-1: Shopping Center District to PC-2: Planned Commercial District. Chair Leeper introduced the item and Mr. Weintraut provided background information. He explained that the item was discussed at the June 23 meeting and briefly explained the proposal again, noting that the Thunder Ridge property is located on West 1st Street and Eagle Ridge Road.

The purpose of the PC-2 district is to promote and facilitate imaginative and comprehensively planned commercial developments which are designed to complement the surrounding community. Further, the purpose of these regulations is to encourage high standards of building architecture and site planning to foster commercial development that maximizes pedestrian convenience, comfort and pleasure. Staff recommends amending the Future Land Use Map from Medium Density Residential to Community Commercial.

The rezoning would allow for multi-use development consisting of retail and financial services, medical/dental/professional offices, a convenience store/gas station, medical supplies/drugstore, memory care facility, and restaurant uses. Mr. Weintraut noted issues with the proposed land use on the west side of the property. The uses are a more intensive and may conflict with the proposed residential use adjacent to the west. The applicant has proposed to mitigate the conflict with a 30' buffer along the western property line, but there are no details at this time as to what the buffer would be. The Commission will need to consider if the buffer screening would be adequate between the commercial and planned residential use to the west or if the site should be reserved for less intensive commercial uses. He displayed architectural renderings for the proposed development stating that there should be consideration given to street aesthetics and architectural design of the buildings that will front on both 1st Street and Whitetail Drive.

Mr. Weintraut also explained that some of the current issues that staff have with the proposal involve the building and parking siting, access to RP zoned property, wetlands, Lake Ridge Drive right-of-way and access. There is a inconsistencies between what is shown in the plan and what is stated in the development guidelines, therefore, staff recommends that the applicant amend the master site plan so that it reflects what is stated in the design guidelines. The master site plan should be revised to reflect the design guideline language dealing with the potential conflict between pedestrians and cars mixing in the parking lots and how

pedestrians access the buildings from the public sidewalks. Or alternately, they could delete the images of the building footprints and the parking lot layouts from each of the lots and reference the guidelines for building and parking lot placement. The applicant has updated the plan showing sidewalks along 1st Street, and all current plans have been updated with the exception of the land use plan, which will be updated if the project goes forward. He discussed the access to the RP zoned property and staff recommends that the access be a continuation of White Tail Drive, but the alternative location shown would be acceptable; however, this location would require an amendment to the RP Plan for the adjacent property to the west, which is not currently under consideration. The dedication of the necessary right-of-way would be required with platting and at least two means of access will be required for the RP zoned property. Prior to any development activity in the area, a definitive wetland mitigation plan will be required and appropriate approvals will need to be received from the U S Army Corps of Engineers. The extension of Lake Ridge Drive will need to be platted as part of the Thunder Ridge development so that the right-of-way is available in the future.

Staff acknowledges the desire to develop the site in more than one phase because of the infrastructure; however, with so little development in the second phase, staff finds that there will be little incentive to extend Lake Ridge Drive to the south. Staff recommends that Lot 7 (medical office building) be moved to Phase II to create more incentive to complete the street connection. The development phasing plan does not meet the subdivision requirement to ensure timely connections of critical infrastructure (the extension of Lake Ridge Drive). Staff does not recommend approval until the phasing plan is amended to provide more certainty that the critical street extension will be made.

Mr. Weintraut noted that there were significant inconsistencies with various documents submitted by the applicant that need to be addressed. Examples include: the design guidelines do not match the master site plan and building and parking placement and there is a lack of pedestrian connections, which are not consistent with design guidelines or with the intent of the PC zoning district. A consistent set of plans is necessary for the development to proceed to the next phase. Since the last meeting, the applicant has provided an updated phasing and landscape plan, and rezoning plat showing sidewalks along W. 1st Street. They have also indicated that the land use plan created by Emergent Architect will also be updated to reflect the sidewalks. Staff recommends that the updates are made to match the design guidelines or simply remove the building and parking lot layouts from the plans to make it clear that the guidelines must be followed when individual sites are developed. Documents, such as the plan drawings and the guidelines, must be cleaned up to be internally consistent prior to approval. One way to address the inconsistencies and the Commission's concern regarding the speculative nature of the proposal would involve removing the labels of various specific uses and instead identify general land uses that might occur on each lot. Staff has also noted concerns with the convenience store/gas station and full service restaurant located next to the RP zoned property, as they typically have hours of operation which extend well into the evening. The extended time period could extend traffic, noise and lighting which could conflict with residential enjoyment. Denoting lower intensity uses for these lots, such as office or financial institution is recommended, or indicate in the development guidelines that hours of operation for any development on these lots will be limited to daytime hours, exterior lighting will be carefully designed to prevent glare and spillover light, and enhanced landscape buffering will be required between the commercial and residential development to the west.

As with any major development there is a considerable amount of infrastructure that must be installed. The phasing plan should be established to ensure that all critical infrastructure is installed. In this case, the proposed phasing should be established in a manner that will ensure that the critical extension of Lake Ridge Drive is completed to the south boundary of the site. With so little development proposed in the second phase, there will be little incentive to construct the remainder of Lake Ridge Drive. To avoid similar mistakes that have been

made in the past, the City recently amended the subdivision code to ensure that these issues are at the forefront when new development is proposed. Now is the time to address this issue. Staff recommends that the phasing plan be amended to more evenly divide the development between the two phases, so that there is incentive to develop the second phase and extend the street to the south boundary of the site. Alternatively, the entirety of the Lake Ridge Drive extension should be installed with the 1st phase of development.

Since the last meeting, the applicant has amended the design guidelines to state buildings should be placed at front setbacks, with parking encouraged to the rear, but goes on to state the final building location will be determined during the site plan process. This is a rather ambiguous statement that does not provide a clear direction on the site design. This ambiguity combined with conflicting master plan documents, provides no real direction for future developers, City staff, the Planning and Zoning Commission or City Council. In addition, the guidelines should address the design of the façades that face W. 1st Street to ensure that they include quality building materials and design elements that address views from 1st Street, a major gateway into the community. For example, loading docks, service entrances and unfinished or blank building walls should be avoided. Dumpster areas should be carefully placed and screened from public view.

Staff recognizes that development is important and that this is an example of a plan that has uses that would complement the area, but the issue is that the planning documents, design guidelines and the critical piece of infrastructure have not been addressed. Therefore, staff recommends denial of the proposed request for the PC-2, Planned Commercial District, unless the aforementioned critical issues are addressed.

Wendell Lupkes, VJ Engineering, 1501 Technology Parkway, stated that he is disappointed in the staff report. He felt there was a good discussion at the last meeting and that he had provided additional information to staff regarding the street connection. He stated that they will extend Lake Ridge to 1st Street and discussed the former DOT approval of a "B" type entrance, which handles between 20 – 150 vehicles per hour. He also noted that they have wetland mitigation approval. He stated that they will also take the specific uses off the plan to be in better compliance.

Mr. Holst asked if there has been any recent discussion with the DOT with regard to the access. Ms. Howard explained that the DOT stated that permission and access permits for the access points will need to be granted. Mr. Schrad asked if Lake Ridge Drive will be connected in Phase I to Whitetail Drive, and why it would need to be extended if it is going to be a dead end street. Ms. Howard explained that it is to ensure that the extension is planned up front to avoid issues with the extension being completed. She also clarified that the previous agreements that Mr. Lupkes has been speaking about are with regard to securing the right-of-way and was not an agreement on the part of the city to construct the road. Mr. Holst asked about the convenience store location that was previously proposed. Ms. Howard explained that staff suggests that there be something in the design guidelines for the sites that are close to the residential area that specifies what is and is not allowed.

Mr. Holst asked for clarification on staff's recommendation for denial. Ms. Howard stated that staff is recommending denial of what has been submitted at this time and would like direction from the Commission to address some of the issues that have not been resolved. Mr. Holst stated that he would like to see the updated and cleaned up documents before voting to proceed to public hearing. There was further discussion and direction about eliminating inconsistencies between documents and what changes should be made.

Mr. Larson made a motion to defer the item to the next meeting. Mr. Holst seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 7 ayes (Holst, Larson, Leeper, Prideaux,

Saul, Schrad and Sears), and 0 nays.

- 3.) The next item for consideration by the Commission was a College Hill site plan review for 2415 Franklin Street. Chair Leeper introduced the item and Mr. Atodaria provided background information. He explained that the applicant is proposing site improvements which include: removing the existing gravel areas on site and seeding with grass; removing the paved access point from Franklin Street to the property and adding curb; adding a parking area/pad accessed from the alleyway; adding landscaping screening around the proposed parking; and adding a four-foot wide sidewalk from the parking area to the house. Staff feels that the requirements will be met and will meet the character of the neighborhood. Staff recommends approval of the submitted design review application. Mr. Atodaria noted that correspondence was received from a neighbor noting that previously there has been an issue with tenants at other rental locations parking on the street instead of parking in the back.

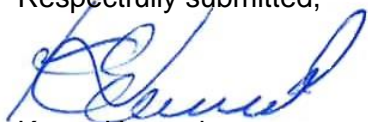
The applicant, Todd Wuestenberg, thanked Mr. Atodaria for his help with the process, stating that he has been a great representative. He noted that he will be available for any questions. Mr. Schrad asked how many bedrooms are in the rental unit and if complies with parking requirements. Mr. Atodaria stated that there are four bedrooms and that it is in compliance and the group rental committee has already approved the rental application with stipulations and the paving was one of the stipulations that needed P&Z and City Council review. Mr. Larson stated that he feels it will be a nice improvement.

Ms. Saul made a motion to approve the item. Ms. Sears seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 7 ayes (Holst, Larson, Leeper, Prideaux, Saul, Schrad and Sears), and 0 nays.

- 4.) Ms. Howard noted that at this time it has not been determined whether meetings will continue in person and via Zoom as the governor has extended the proclamation. As there were no further comments, Mr. Holst made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Schrad seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with 7 ayes (Holst, Larson, Leeper, Prideaux, Saul, Schrad and Sears), and 0 nays.

The meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Karen Howard
Community Services Manager



Joanne Goodrich
Administrative Assistant