

REGULAR NORWALK PLANNING AND ZONING MEETING 6-27-2016

Call to order

The Regular Meeting of the Norwalk Planning and Zoning Commission was held at the Norwalk City Hall, 705 North Avenue, Monday, June 27, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 5:47 p.m. by Chairperson Chad Ross. Those present at roll call were, Judy McConnell, John Fraser, Elizabeth Thompson, Brandon Foldes, Donna Grant and Chad Ross. Absent: Jim Huse.

Present was City Council liaison Stephanie Riva.

Staff present included: Luke Parris, City Planner; Wade Wagoner, Planning and Economic Development Director; and Shelley Stravers, Development Services Assistant.

Approval of Agenda – 16-34

Motion by McConnell and seconded by Thompson to approve the agenda as presented. Approved 6-0.

Approval of Minutes – 16-35

Motion by McConnell and seconded by Fraser to approve the minutes from the May 25, 2016 meeting. Approved 6-0.

Welcome of Guests

Chairperson Ross welcomed guests present. With no one wishing to speak, the business portion of the meeting was opened.

New Business

Request from Norwalk Land Co, LLC to approve the Final Plat of the Norwalk Orchard View Plat 3 – 16-36

Parris informed Commission that this request would create 28 single family lots in the Norwalk Orchard View and Orchard Hills developments. This development will create a critical connection of Orchard Hills Drive from North Ave. to Wright Road and the sports complex. Orchard Hills Drive will include the continuation of the 31' wide street, which will increase traffic between Wright Road and North Ave. The plat includes an 8' sidewalk along the east side of Orchard Hills Drive.

Lots 1-21 are part of the Orchard Hills PUD. Lots 22-28 along Bradford Drive are part of the Orchard View PUD. Outlot X, to the west of this subdivision, is an R-3 parcel of the Orchard View Townhomes that is currently owned by Norwalk Land Co, LLC.

Setbacks for Lots 1-21 are 25' front and 30' rear. Lots 22-28 are 30' front and 35' rear. All lots have 12' side setbacks.

The storm water from lots on the east side of this development drains into onsite detention basins. The other lots drain to the street collection system which is ultimately detained in an offsite detention pond to the east.

Parkland dedication for the area is identified in the PUD as the 4 acre park to the north along Orchard Hills Drive.

Commission expressed concern about sidewalks and the importance of being able to get from development to development via sidewalks. Ross stated the only place in the area that doesn't connect with sidewalks is at the church, where they don't have any sidewalks. Riva thought the church was required to put in sidewalks once things were built up around there and there was something to connect to. Parris will look into this and report at the next meeting.

Jim Campney spoke to the Commission. He had his walk through for infrastructure today with Public Works Director. They are wrapping that all up and the City will hopefully accept the infrastructure at the July 7th Council meeting, at the same time the Final Plat is on the agenda.

Thompson asked if there are any future plans to have a roadway out of the development to the west? Parris answered that would be a road there eventually, but right now, due to the lack of City infrastructure to the west, it will not happen soon. Our City limits are right there and it will be quite an investment to get the infrastructure in that area.

Motion by Grant and seconded by Fraser to approve Final Plat of the Norwalk Orchard View Plat 3 with the following conditions: that the applicant provides all supporting documentation required within the Norwalk Subdivision Regulations; and that any significant modifications to the final plat be reviewed and approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council.

Discussion on Subdivision Regulations update focusing on Complete Streets

Parris updated Commission, with Wagoner passing out an additional article, "Narrow Streets Do More With Less". Parris explained that the City of Norwalk was one of the first metro communities to adopt a Complete Streets policy into its subdivision regulations. The idea of Complete Streets is that a street should be designed to accommodate all users of the public right-of-way, such as bicyclists, pedestrians, automobiles, and transit use. Norwalk's Complete Streets Policy was adopted 10 years ago and a large amount of additional research has gone into how Complete Streets should be designed. Parris noted that our current ordinance does a good job stating that we should do things to connect neighborhoods, paths on both side of the streets, bike paths, etc., but does not require us to do those things. Parris suggested it might be time for an update to require some work be done to make our community more walkable.

The Commission discussed trails and parks and how important this all is. It was agreed that the Commission needed to work with other City boards to do a better job of master planning for trails and parks. With that complete, developers will be required to put in parks or trails if they are on the master plan.

Riva commented that it's not just a bike trail that we need, but we need to make sure we are connecting neighborhoods to each other. It is too late for some developments such as Orchard Hills, which is already a bunch of disconnected streets and cul-de-sacs.

Parris noted that walkability is increased when there are destinations for people. In Orchard Hills area, there are not a lot of opportunities for walkable destinations. We need to make sure we are planning for those also.

Riva asked what the time frame was for this to all start taking place. She recommended doing another joint meeting with the City Council to involve them early on in the process so they are informed when making decisions later down the road. We need to decide how we want the future development of Norwalk to look, including parks, trails and sidewalks. The subdivision ordinance has a lot of impact on developments as they are being built.

Invitation to SubArea 1 Master Plan and Future Land Use Update Open House on July 6th

Parris passed out a flyer to Commission members to have another public meeting next Wednesday, July 6 at 6 pm. The steering committee is meeting this Wednesday. This project is moving into the

home stretch. This meeting will be focused on the future land use update for the entire community and the SubArea 1 Master Plan.

Discussion on the first chapter of Suburban Nation

Wagoner opened discussion on article he passed out "Narrow Streets Do More With Less" and on the first chapter of Suburban Nation. Wagoner questioned Commissioners if there is a way we can do some of the projects we would like to do as a City, but with less money. Discussion was held on sizes of sidewalks and costs, whether sidewalks are needed on both sides of the street and the cost difference if we took one side out, narrower streets that require cars and bikes/pedestrians to all get along well and the cost savings if we made them narrower.

Commission questioned when we are thinking about bringing these changes forward.

Commissioners also mentioned working on a master park plan and a trail plan. Wagoner explained that we need to find ways to pay for the parks, equipment, trails, etc. If we can find a cost savings for the developers with the sidewalks and lessening the width of the streets to make the streets safer, this would also encourage developers to be inclined to put more money towards parks and trails. Wagoner asked if the members would rather have the wider streets and sidewalks on both sides of the street, or have the amenities of parks and trails?

Much discussion was held regarding Orchard Hills Park and that this was part of the master plan for the PUD a long time ago. Wagoner explained that we can't do anything about that now, but we have a lot of Norwalk to be built out yet. If we get an idea of how much money per lot we would need to save a developer in sidewalk/streets, in order to get the parkland and equipment we want, then we could amend the subdivision ordinance to up that amount to what we feel would be enough.

Wagoner explained that the book is a criticism of post-World War 2 development. The philosophy is that if two cars can pass each other and go faster than 10 mph, it is too fast.

Commission asked how soon staff is thinking of making these changes? Wagoner thought in February when it is staff's slow time that would be a good time to bring forth a draft Subdivision Regulations for review and discussion. Parris noted that staff needs to first find out if this is something that Planning & Zoning and City Council support and want to move forth with. If not, then staff will continue with what we currently have.

Commissioners discussed that generating savings to be used for parkland or trails, and tying that into the current parks and trails master plan and then making sure streets are connected. The future developments could have smaller streets and we could start there, but that might be hard tying the older developments into the new with the street size being different.

Commission commented that SubArea 1 is a place where we could start implementing some of these concepts possibly. Parris noted that SubArea 1 might take some of these concepts and even push them farther. He thinks there is a base level that we can set as a better standard that what we have now.

McConnell expressed her concern for the problems we have created in our society with our massive auto dependency due to the way we have developed. She feels we need to look forward and look at some of the other walkable communities mentioned in the book, such as Seaside, FL. She would like the Commission to explore way to get back to some of these old ways.

Commission asked to get through the book quicker to speed up the process of drafting new Subdivision Regulations and what we want those to look like. Everyone will read through Chapter 4 before the next meeting on July 11.

Wagoner noted there are two developments in the metro area that he would like to take the Commission on a field trip very soon to see. They are West Green Meadows in Johnston; and Prairie Trail in Ankeny. Ross asked Wagoner to email the Commission two or three different dates that they could do this and get it put on the calendar.

Staff Development Update

Wagoner handed out a spreadsheet showing projected tax revenue for the next ten years if we build the Elizabeth Holland Park detention pond, and the development that will likely occur due to that. Wagoner said it was important to note that this is in a TIF district. This is a very large project for a city the size of Norwalk. This is somewhat of a projected revenue to justify the cost of this project. This item is on the agenda for the City Council Work Session Thursday night.

Riva commented that the Council feels this project is very important, but is trying to find a way to make cuts to fund it since the bid came in higher than expected.

Wagoner also informed Commission that Jonathan Martin contacted him and there is a slight issue with the entrance sign. The original location for the sign is not out of an easement and Martin would like to move it 165 feet to the south. If we don't move the sign, we will need to get approval from the DOT to expand the easement, and there is not telling how long that will take. This will be on the Council agenda July 7.

Wagoner announced the addition that the Development Services Department has had in the last month. Alan Waugh, Storm Water/Nuisance Inspector has moved from the Public Works Department to our department full time. It seemed to make sense to bring him back to our department since our planning and building departments work closely with him with storm water, along with Development Services being in charge of nuisances. When he was moved to Public Works several years ago, the intention was to eventually bring him back.

Grant left meeting at 8:17 P.M.

Future Business Items

Parris provided an update on future upcoming business items. The City received a second request for an amendment to the Orchard View Planned Unit Development and a request to amend the Legacy Planned Unit Development. Public hearings for the amendments will be held on July 11th. Parris also discussed upcoming plats and other projects.

Adjournment – 16-37

Motion by Foldes and seconded by Fraser to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 P.M. Approved 5-0.

Chad A. Ross, Chairperson

Luke Parris, City Planner