

BLUE ASH PLANNING COMMISSION

August 7, 2014

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ITEM 1: MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Ray Schafer called the regular meeting of the Blue Ash Planning Commission to order at 7:07 p.m. on Thursday, August 7, 2014.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Raymond Schafer, Mike Duncan, John Moores, and Jim Sumner

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Paul Collett, Jr.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager David Waltz, Assistant City Manager Kelly Harrington, Community Development Director Dan Johnson, Mayor Lee Czerwonka, Council Member Stephanie Stoller, and interested citizens

ITEM 2: OPENING CEREMONY

Pledge of Allegiance

ITEM 3: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commission members waived the reading of the minutes.

DECISION: Mike Duncan moved, Jim Sumner seconded, to approve the regular meeting minutes of July 8, 2014 as submitted. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

ITEM 4: HEARINGS

a. 10538 & 10592 Plainfield Road – Great Traditions Development Group
Large Scale Residential Development

PRESENT: James Kiefer – Applicant

Chair Schafer commented that this item is in the process of being considered by Council for a zoning change from R-1 to R-3.

Jim Kiefer provided background information on the Great Traditions projects in Blue Ash. He said that early on in the project they met with City Staff including the Fire Chief and City Engineer to make sure all Code requirements were met. They also had a meeting where they invited all the adjacent property owners to the project. They received a lot of good input which they will take into consideration as they move forward with the final development plans for the project.

Doug Hinger, President of Great Traditions Homes, presented the proposal for the McConaughy property. He said they like to develop neighborhoods of lasting value and incorporate existing natural features. The distinctive features of this site are the stream that runs through the center and the perimeter of existing trees. The four elements that make up the site plan are the streets, open spaces, building lots, and the community entry. The proposed streets will be public. The site is approximately 21.7 acres and almost 25% will be open space. There will be two detention basins at north of site. The south, which abuts Fox Hollow, has a 30-foot buffer and they will try to keep as many of the mature trees as possible. The cul-de-sacs will be buffered to ensure that car lights do not disturb neighboring properties. The development will be pedestrian-friendly and residents will be able to walk throughout the community and to Summit Park. There are 66 building lots with three types of lots: walkouts, perimeters, and courtyard. There will only be one entry from Plainfield Road.

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Perimeter is very important. The buffer along the south property line will also be enhanced with additional landscaping and screening.

The home sites are generally about 65-feet wide by 120-feet deep and very much in keeping with the character of the entire area and neighboring community. The homes are priced between the high \$400,000 to \$600,000 depending on the lot location and features selected. Based on feedback they have received, they made a shift in this development to make the lots wider and shallower to give a better street presence with the garage not being the predominant feature. The homes range in size from 1,500 to 2,300 square feet mostly on one floor, but will also offer two floors. They created a wider house, set the garages back at least 10-feet on the side with parking in front of it, and connected the front of the house directly into the sidewalk.

The building setbacks they are seeking are 20-feet in front, 20-feet in rear, 5-feet on each side. The only exception is that front porches can encroach into that front setback by 5-feet. Typically there is a 15-foot utility easement, so they want to use that extra 5-feet to enable residents to have a front porch. Mr. Hinger also gave an overview of the courtyard feature and landscape buffers to the rear and side. They are proud of the variety they offer for empty nesters and families.

Jim Sumner asked about the administrative process for approval. Mr. Johnson answered that this requires a recommendation to Council on approval of a Large Scale Residential Development Plan. An approval would allow them to build the infrastructure and then they eventually have to come back for approval of a final plat.

In answer to questions by the Commission, Mr. Hinger said the exterior of the homes will be a combination of materials with traditional style and architecture. Brick will be predominant but they will also use a low-maintenance vinyl shake-shingle. Parking in the cul-de-sacs will be restricted to one side. The sidewalks will be at the back of the right-of-way and be 4-feet wide on the cul-de-sacs and 5-feet wide on the main road. They are planning for concrete driveways. There will be streetlights in the subdivision, but they were not planning to add streetlights on Plainfield Road. The HOA will take care of all open space and buffers, and will include grass cutting, mulching, and snow removal for homeowners. They are estimating the HOA fees will be approximately \$125-175 per month. Mr. Hinger said they will have a Landscaping Committee that is made up of residents.

There was discussion regarding street improvements on Plainfield Road to upgrade curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and stormwater drainage. The Commissioners felt these improvements should be made as part of the new subdivision.

Mr. Duncan asked about Lots 43-46 that do not have street frontage. Mr. Johnson said the County may not approve lots without street frontage and he is not sure how the developer is planning to address that. Staff is comfortable with recommending approval as proposed, if the developer is willing to address the issue with the County.

John Moores asked about the creek and Mr. Johnson explained that the development will be required to satisfy all of the regulations of the Hamilton County Stormwater District. The City Engineer will review and approve all of the plans to ensure that it does.

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Ray Schafer asked about the meeting that the developers had with adjacent residents and what concerns they might have. Mr. Kiefer said the residents to the north had concerns with the creek and potential flooding. McGill Smith Punshon is designing stormwater detention and recognizes it will be highly scrutinized by the City Engineer. Fox Hollow residents asked about trees for the 30-foot buffer, which ones were being kept and what will be planted. He said overall it was a good neighborhood meeting with good dialog.

Chair Schafer opened for public comment.

Jonathon Schwartz who lives at 4144 fox Hollow Drive commented that the zoning change needs to be approved prior to this going through. He attended the resident meeting and thought it was well-run. His main concern was that there is year-round evergreen screening for vehicular lighting and streetlights. Especially around the cul-de-sacs since that is the rear of their homes and where their bedrooms are located.

As there were no further comments, Chair Schafer closed public comment.

In answer to a question, Mr. Hinger said they will be happy to accommodate the homeowner's request for more evergreen as part of the buffer instead of deciduous and mounding. They will be happy to talk to the individual homeowners to work out a plan to ensure the ends of the cul-de-sacs are property screened.

Jim Sumner commented that this is an exciting project and a great use of the land.

DECISION: Mike Duncan moved, Jim Sumner seconded, to recommend to City Council approval for a Large Scale Residential Development by Great Traditions Development at 10538 & 10592 Plainfield Road with the following conditions:

1. The proposed rezoning of the property to R-3 Residential District is approved by City Council
2. Applicant to satisfy all concerns of the City Engineer relative to traffic safety on Plainfield Road
3. The public infrastructure be extended along Plainfield Road frontage to be consistent with remainder of Plainfield Road as clarified by the City Engineer and Public Works Director
4. Covenants and restrictions applied to the future owner's association shall not include or rely on the City of Blue Ash
5. All landscaping be consistent with the description provided by the applicant including significant buffering at the terminus of each cul-de-sac or at any other place where vehicular lights may negatively impact existing, adjacent development
6. Any modifications to the plan that are not minor or consistent with the application may be required to be submitted to the Planning Commission for further review

A roll call vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

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ITEM 5: MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

David Waltz said there will be a Land Use Plan presentation at the next Council meeting which will be an update of the progress report to date. That same presentation will be provided at the next Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Waltz invited the Commission to attend the Grand Opening of Phase 1 at Summit Park on August 9, 2014.

ITEM 6: ADJOURNMENT

DECISION: There being no further business to be discussed, Mike Duncan moved, Jim Sumner seconded, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Ray Schafer, Chair

MINUTES RECORDED BY:

Traci Smith