

LOWELL PLAN COMMISSION MEETING

April 11th, 2024

President John Alessia called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Recording Secretary Dianna Cade called the roll. Members answering the roll call were Greg White, John Alessia, Shane Lawrence. Manny Fausto, Daniel Smith, Jim Konradi, and Shane Tucker. Also, present was Craig Hendrix, Town Engineer, Rich Oman, Director of Planning and Development, and Town Attorney Nicole Bennett.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Frausto made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from February 8th, 2024, seconded by Mr. Lawrence and carried with a voice vote of all ayes.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

PC #24-013- PUD PRELIMINARY PLAT AND DEVELOPMENTAL PLAN Approx. 5920 BELSHAW RD - Preliminary PUD plan petition on parcels within the Town boundaries of Lowell. Petition has been filed by Providence Real Estate, 200 W 22nd St., Ste 240, Lombard, IL 60148. This is for property located at approx. 5920 Belshaw Rd., 45-19-36-126-001.000-008. The property is one county parcel number consisting of six deeded parcels of approximately 193 acres and is currently zoned a PUD.

Attorney Jim Wieser, Wieser & Wyllie Law Offices, Schererville, IN. Attorney Wieser stated he is representing Providence Real Estate. He also stated that present tonight were numerous staff from Providence and Manhard Engineering to answer any technical questions.

Attorney Wieser gave the Commission a review of the timeline for this project, including annexation and PUD rezone approval date. He stated this is a mix use community. He stated the project is named Stone Mill. The development consists of almost 50% open space. He discussed the wooded area that would be dedicated to the town. There are 2 miles of walking paths. He discussed the access points. He stated a traffic study was done.

Attorney Wieser stated the plan is for 159 traditional single-family homes. Mr. Langlo (Providence) indicated the area of this type of product in the community on the map that was displayed on the large screen as he did with the rest of the products that Attorney Wieser discussed. The products are: Single Family Villa homes, 9 paired villas (18 units), and townhomes. There will be an HOA and they will maintain the conservation and open space areas. Except for the tree line area that will be dedicated to the town. Attorney Wieser discussed the ordinance and developmental plan that was being presented to the commission tonight.

Mr. Oman using the map on the screen discussed the location of the sanitary sewer for this project. He stated it is a 15 inch line built in 2008. The town hired Wesler Engineering to do a study on the sanitary sewer and it was determined that there is enough capacity for this project. Mr. Oman discussed the water location. It is a 14" main and stubs are located at Ironwood and Wildwood. There will be ample water for this project. Mr. Oman stated Manhard did a drain tile survey. Manhard designed the ponds and stormwater system to the town's standards. Mr. Oman discussed the traffic study that was done by a licensed engineer at DVG. He stated there was discussion on the intersections of Belshaw & Joe Martin and Burr St extended to Belshaw. The suggestions from the

traffic engineer are implemented in Manhards design. Mr. Oman stated at the TRC meeting a stripping plan was requested.

Mr. Oman stated Soil Solutions was hired to do the wetland delineation report. He continued the staff was looking for the impacts. There are 3 areas on the West side of Joe Martin. Staff discussed extensively during the TRC the large tree line that borders Woodland Hills Sub and this property. There are two stub streets that were intended to get connected with future building, Wildwood and Ironwood. Police and Fire stated they would both like the connections on Wildwood and Ironwood made. Mr. Oman then indicated on the map the area that is labeled as oak hickory forest. Mr. Oman stated this area has been deemed the least area for impact as it is the highest rated quality trees. Those trees were rated. He discussed the tree area that is south of the NIPSCO pipeline and stated those trees are scrub and can be destroyed. Mr. Oman stated staff's major concern is impacting the green area or- high quality tree location with the roadways and the lots. Mr. Hendrix discussed the wetland areas that are high quality. He stated those areas are not getting touched by this project. Mr. Hendrix stated that staff requested that the petitioner make these two road connections and they are in the plan. At the time, staff did not have the environmental report. He stated staff has had some discussion on whether it makes sense to extend the streets or even put development in this forest area. The green tree area is an old growth tree location. Mr. Hendrix stated the developer was told they could demolish the purple area because there are very invasive species in there and there is no value like the green area. Mr. Hendrix stated staff would like to discuss with the Plan Commission what is important to them, connections or preserving the tree line. He realizes it is all important. He stated there was some discussion amongst staff to not connect Wildwood. There will be a looped water main in this area so there will be minimal disturbance. He stated Ironwood is a very long street, it was not meant to be a cul-de-sac. Is it good for Ironwood to go through and not Wildwood. He stated staff would like to ask for the Commission to have a discussion on this. He stated the street could go through without the lots. He discussed his thoughts, which included Ironwood going through and Wildwood not. President Alessia asked what the TRC's opinion was. Mr. Hendrix stated Fire would like to see them extended, which is understandable. The Police would like them to go through, but it is not a deal breaker for them. Engineering is following the town's standards including the street width. Mr. Oman displayed on the large monitor the landscape plan for the Commission to have a visual to see. Mr. Oman discussed the tree line, the road connections and the lots that would stay and/or be taken away with the changes. Discussion on the different scenarios.

Mr. Trevor Murphy with Manhard Engineering. Mr. Murphy passed out to the Commission some computations that he did at the request of the staff. He stated the sheet indicating the original layout and the layout with Wildwood not going through. He discussed the trees that would remain with the change of Wildwood. He stated the revision would increase the trees being saved to 75%. It is an 18-acre area, and this alteration would keep 13-14 acres of the high-quality trees. The intention with any lots backing this area would be for an easement to be placed that would not allow the lot owners to disturb the tree line. That comes close to doubling the number of trees that would be saved in comparison to the original design. The original design had 11 acres being saved and 7 acres being destroyed. The revision would preserve over 13 acres. Manhard had intended to keep the second growth area as it is to be used for a wooded area for the residents.

President Alessia stated he is in favor of saving as many trees as possible. He asked who would maintain the forest area. Mr. Murphy stated the original design was to be deeded to the town. He is assuming the area would be put in a conservation easement and deeded to town, but it could also be maintained by the HOA whichever the town would prefer. President Alessia stated he would request that the language be added protecting the tree area from homeowners who purchase the lots that backup to this area and not allowing them to knock any of the trees down.

Mr. Smith asked about outlot W. He asked if it would remain wooded. Mr. Murphy said yes. Discussion on a tree survey. Discussion on the Plan Commission vote if the changes are desired by the Commission. Discussion on the motions that could be made by the Plan Commission. Attorney Bennett discussed the conditions that could be implemented by the Commission for its recommendation.

Mr. Konradi asked about the traffic flow. Mr. Hendrix discussed the traffic study. Mr. Hendrix stated that Burr & Joe Martin would be a 4-way intersection. Westbound on Belshaw will be a through and a right turn, and a center through left. On Burr and Joe Martin heading south there will be a center left turn and a right turn. He stated initially developer wanted to develop Burr at a later phase. Mr. Hendrix stated staff agreed the connection needs to be made now. Traffic must be kept off Joe Martin, which is a collector street. Burr is an arterial. Staff agreed that the Burr extension needs to be put in before any occupancy permits are issued. He stated in the meantime a stone base would be ok, for emergency vehicles. He discussed the construction traffic route. Mr. Hendrix stated the fences down Joe Martin will be required to be the same so that they match placement and type. Mr. Hendrix stated there are trails in the subdivision. The only improvements on Belshaw are accel/decel lanes.

President Alessia opened up the public hearing.

Doug Smith, 18914 Dallas Ct, Lowell, IN. Mr. Smith stated he lives in Cedar Creek Heights Sub., bordering this proposed community. NW corner Belshaw and Joe Martin. He stated he and his neighbors are concerned about the well and septic that they currently have. President Alessia stated there is no intention of annexing. It would be the homeowner's decision not the town. Mr. Smith asked if there will be duplexes and townhomes being built. President Alessia asked for clarification and if he was referring to bordering his home. Mr. Smith stated yes, and the entire community. President Alessia stated there are paired villas and townhomes. Discussion on the location of these two specific products. Mr. Smith asked for the approx. starting date. Mr. Langlo stated the first phase would start mid-late summer once approvals are done. He described the products that are in the first phase.

Barb Matthias 18915 Dallas Ct., Lowell, IN. Mrs. Matthias asked if the entire community would be an HOA. Mr. Langlo stated yes. Mrs. Matthias asked why the retention ponds were needed if the storm sewers were adequate. Mr. Murphy (Manhard) explained the role of the storm sewers and the retention ponds in a subdivision. Discussion. She asked what the size of the pond was that borders her property. Discussion. She asked about the intersection of Belshaw and Joe Martin and if it would be a 4-way stop. Mr. Hendricks stated it will start out as a 3-way until the development begins on the south side of Belshaw then it will be a 4-way.

Vernon Davis, 1124 Driftwood Dr., Lowell, IN. He stated the green area backs up to his yard. He gets a lot of water, so much that it rolls down his driveway. At least 2" solid down his driveway. He is asking what will happen now that all these houses are being added. President Alessia stated it will assist by giving the water direction. Mr. Murphy (Manhard) stated this plan could change that is he going to discuss depending on the outcome of the road connections. He stated all the homes along this property line right now drain north, and they are installing a line of storm to collect and route the water to the detention basin. He stated anywhere they are putting the development in they will be collecting the water and route into the detention basin. Discussion. Mr. Davis asked what kind of housing would be behind his. Mr. Murphy stated it is the traditional single family. Mr. Davis asked if more houses will be put in than what was on the original plan? Mr. Hendrix stated no, it will be less if the alternate plan is used that preserves the tree line. Discussion.

18915 Dallas, Ct. Lowell, IN. Mr. Matthias asked if the property has been purchased yet. Mr. John Carroll (Providence) stated they are under contract to purchase. The first transaction will happen after the approvals from the town.

Doug Smith, 18914 Dallas Ct. Lowell, IN. He stated they are on the north side of the Cedar Creek subdivision where there is a tree line that separates his house from this property. Will the tree line be staying? Mr. Murphy stated the tree line extends 10-12 ft into this property and the intention is to match and start their development just north of there and leave the trees.

President Alessia asked if there was anybody online via zoom platform. Mr. Oman stated yes, they are all muted. President Alessia asked the attendees that were on zoom to raise their hands if they wished to comment. No hands were visible being raised nor was there any audible heard from these attendees. The public hearing was closed.

Mr. White made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the town council, for PUD preliminary plat, ordinance, and developmental plan, with the condition that these documents were amended per the request of the Plan Commission to include Ironwood Dr exhibit as per discussion tonight, seconded by Mr. Konradi and carried with a roll call vote of all ayes.

Mr. White made a motion to adopt the staff report as the findings of fact on the condition that the staff recommendation be modified to include the language that a condition was made with changes as proposed to the new Ironwood Dr. exhibit that was presented tonight, seconded by Mr. Lawrence and carried with a roll call vote of all ayes.

An audience member is heard asking if they will be notified for any of the other required meetings. President Alessia stated no, the rest of the meetings public hearings are not required.

DISCUSSION: NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT: None is heard in person or on-line.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on May 9th, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

With no further comments or questions, Mr. Konradi made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00PM., seconded by Mr. Tucker and carried by a voice vote of all ayes.

John Alessia, President

Manny Frausto, Secretary