

WLOWELL PLAN COMMISSION MEETING FEBRUARY 13TH, 2025

President John Alessia called the meeting to order at 7:35pm. (Board of Zoning meeting went longer than scheduled) The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and a moment of silence was held. Recording Secretary, Dianna Cade called the roll. Members answering the roll call were Greg White, John Alessia, Shane Tucker and Daniel Smith. Jim Konradi and Shane Lawrence participated in the meeting VIA zoom. Manny Frausto was absent. Also, present was Rich Oman, Director of Planning and Development and Town Attorney Nicole Bennett.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Tucker made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from January 9th, 2025 and seconded by Mr. White and carried by a roll call vote of all ayes.

NEW BUSINESS:

**Discussion: Boulder Ridge / current vacant land - approx. 16904 Cline Ave
Kevin Paszko, Ed Recktenwall – OLTHFO Homes – 8501 Wicker Ave., St. John, IN**

Mr. Paszko stated they were here tonight to unveil a new community in Lowell. He stated this is the first one for them in Lowell. He stated the site is one parcel consisting of approx. 141 acres. The current use of the parcel is farmland. He discussed the exact location of the parcel. The parcel was zoned R1 and was recently rezoned to PUD for a proposed subdivision that was to be called Freedom Lakes. The previous owner/developer sold the property to Olthof and they will be the new developer. He discussed zoning of some of the surrounding parcels. He discussed the Town's comprehensive plan. He discussed the concept plan. It consisted of one hundred and fourteen single- family detached lots at 60x130 these are a smaller slab style. Forty-eight single- family detached lots at 80x130 these are traditional single- family. Forty single- family attached duplex lots or 80 total units at 90x130 these are paired cottage style smaller slabs. One hundred and fifty-three single-family attached front-loaded townhomes 20x100 per unit. Which is a total of 395 units and a density of 2.78. units/acre.

He discussed the amenities and open space. He stated these areas will encompass approx. 60 acres. There are existing ravines that run through the property and NIPSCO electric line easement. He stated there will be a dog park in the community and playground located in the eighty-foot lot area. A pavilion with gas grill and fire pit near the townhome area. Full sidewalk network and trails that run throughout the development. There is a proposed trail connection to the one that is in Freedom Park. There is a lift station. Open space and park will be owned and maintained by the HOA. Excel and decel lanes will be provided by the entrances and necessary frontage improvements along Cline Ave including sidewalks.

Discussion on growth in the area. There are three exits onto Cline Ave. and one connection to Heritage Falls from Ben Franklin. There will be two stub streets to the west.

Mr. White asked if the amenities are for the subdivision residents only. Mr. Paszko stated they are private only for the residents of this HOA. Attorney Bennett asked who would enforce these rules. Mr. Paszko stated they have a management company that does routine checks on the amenities. Attorney Bennett stated for instance, an unknown at the dog park would not be something that the local police would enforce it would be an internal requirement of the HOA. Mr. Recktenwall stated for the dog park there is gate access control. Mr. Smith asked if the trail will be private. Mr. Paszko stated that it will be public since it will be connected to Freedom

Trail.

Mr. White stated every dead-end street must have a turnaround for plows and garbage trucks.

Mr. Smith asked about the configuration of the front load townhomes. Mr. Paszko stated they have four or five and up to eight-unit sections proposed in this development. Mr. Smith asked if there were any similar developments that were built out in the area. Discussion.

Discussion: Hickory Ridge /current vacant land – approx. 18572 Clark St. Jack Slager, Shilling Development, 8900 Wicker Ave, St. John.

Mr. Slager summarized the background of the company and their projects. He stated the Lowell parcel has been owned by Shilling for over twenty years. He discussed the entrances of the development. They are a developer only; they do not build the homes. There will be multiple builders. There will be an HOA and covenants. Shillings will review each home for architectural design from the perspective builders. There is marketing for each development. Master plan for the site based on the topo. He discussed the neighboring parcels. They would propose a PUD zoning. The proposed development would consist of three products. A section of single-family homes on 80x135 lots, an area of maintenance free/cottage homes on 70' lots and paired villas on 90' lots for a total of 224 units on 78 acres. There would be an entrance on Clark St and Belshaw Rd. There would be a future stub to the west. The development would connect on the north end to the existing stub street in Beverly Estates.

President Alessia asked if each product would have its own builder. Mr. Slager stated yes, probably three different builders. There would be three to four phases.

Mr. White stated that there would need to be a turnaround on any dead-end streets for garbage trucks and public utility vehicles. Discussion.

DISCUSSION:

Calumet Astro Society. Dave Ryan, 7340 Tapper Ave, Hammond, IN, President of Lake County Astro Society.

He stated the society operates in conjunction with the Lake County parks an astronomical observatory in Lowell. The center includes the Northwest Indiana Robotic Telescope which is operated by Purdue Northwest and the Thomas Conway Observatory. Discussion on the history of the facility. He discussed the community outreach events/programs that are performed by the society. Mr. Ryan discussed the four observatories on the property.

Mr. Ryan stated the observatories need darkness. He discussed the development in the area that has affected the night skies. He discussed Lowell's lighting ordinance. He discussed LED 's high output of illumination versus incandescent. He stated the society would like to see the lighting ordinance updated and would be happy to assist the town in this endeavor.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on March 13th, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further comments or questions, Mr. Tucker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10pm, seconded by Mr. White and carried by voice vote of all ayes.

John Alessia, President

Manny Frausto, Secretary