



COTTAGE GROVE PLANNING COMMISSION
12800 Ravine Parkway South
Cottage Grove, MN 55016

July 22, 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER - 7:00 P.M.

The Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was held in the Council Chamber and telecast on Local Government Cable Channel 16.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Frazier called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Pradeep Bhat-Absent; Ken Brittain-Here; Jessica Fisher-Here; Evan Frazier-Here; Eric Knable-Here; Derek Rasmussen-Here; Emily Stephens-Absent

Members Absent: Pradeep Bhat
Emily Stephens

Staff Present: Emily Schmitz, Community Development Director; Conner Jakes, Associate Planner; Crystal Raleigh, Assistant City Engineer; Tony Khambata, City Council Liaison.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Brittain made a motion to approve the agenda. Fisher seconded. The motion was approved unanimously (5-to-0 vote).

4. OPEN FORUM

Frazier opened the open forum and asked if anyone wished to address the Planning Commission on any non-agenda item. No one spoke. Frazier closed the open forum.

5. CHAIR'S EXPLANATION OF THE PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS

Frazier explained the purpose of the Planning Commission, which serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council, and that the City Council makes all final decisions. In addition, he explained the process of conducting a public hearing and requested that any person wishing to speak should go to the microphone and state their full name and address for the public record.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND APPLICATIONS

6.1 Preserve at Prairie Dunes - Cases CP/ZA/PUD/PP2024-015

Pulte Homes of Minnesota, LLC has applied for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Preliminary Plat, Rezoning, and a Planned Unit Development (PUD) for a project to be known

as Preserve at Prairie Dunes that would consist of 162 single-family homes on approximately 60 acres generally located south and west of the NorthPoint Development, east of the DNR owned Scientific and Natural Area (SNA), and west of the Graymont Village residential development.

Jakes summarized the staff report and recommended approval subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report.

Frazier asked if the commissioners had any questions for Jakes, but none were asked.

Frazier asked if the applicant would like to step to the podium. Haley Daily, Manager of Land Planning and Entitlement, stated I work with Pulte Homes, and also here today is Dean Lotter, our Director of Land Planning and Entitlement. I just wanted to give a brief overview of some of the homes we're building, give some more details on that, as well as who Pulte is and our approach to this site, as well as our proposed homes. Daily stated we sell to all different types of people in the area. We started in 1950, and this is a current map of our neighborhoods in the Twin Cities area that we're currently building. We're a national homebuilder in the United States, and we focus on consumer-driven designs; what that really means is we're just very survey focused, we're always reaching out to consumers who've bought in the past, potential consumers who want to build homes and design homes that work best for the market conditions. In the Twin Cities, we sell homes under two brands, Pulte Homes and Del Webb; this proposed neighborhood would be a Pulte Homes neighborhood.

Our site approach is relatively similar to the previous proposal; this is just more of a zoomed-in view of the northern portion, which is mainly composed of 45-foot lots and some 65-foot lots; the southern portion of the site would be 65-foot lots. Homes on the 45-foot lots: We would offer 5 floorplans with multiple elevations; the square footage varies from just under 1,600 to under 2,200. There are 2-to-4 bedrooms offered, as well as 2-to-2.5 baths. We offer 2-stall garages, as well as different elevations with homes that can be 1-or-2 stories.

These are just renderings of homes we've built; on the bottom left is an actual house that we have built in the Twin Cities. As you can see, there are multiple different types of front-facing elevation, so it creates a really diverse community. Not all of the planned elevations we have are shown on this slide, because we have multiple ones per plan. We offer a unique color package system, so there are multiple different colors that a homeowner can choose for their homes. For the inside of the homes, we have tall ceilings, upgraded countertops and cabinets; so, a variety of features that homeowners can customize to their liking during the sale process.

Regarding our 65-foot homes, we offer 6 different floorplans with multiple elevations; these are geared toward more of the move-up buyer, so the square footage is a little bit larger, just under 2,400 square feet and just under 3,300 square feet. This does not include the basement square footage, so if there is a basement, it'll also be a little bit larger. There are 3-to-4 bedrooms offered, as well as 2-to-2.5 baths. Our 65-foot homes would offer a 3rd-stall garage, and this product also comes in 1-or-2 stories.

Daily stated here are some different renderings of our proposed homes; there is stone offered on this one as well, different types of siding, accent siding, louvers, dormers, all types of different architectural features that make each home feel unique. Again, the inside of the homes are just

large, open spaces, high ceilings, beautiful countertops; we really focused on what the consumer would want in this area.

Lastly, as discussed, we're proposing 162 homes with multiple product types and different elevations and different color packages. We want to create a diverse community for everyone, and we also want to provide high quality and aesthetically pleasing homes for everyone.

Frazier asked if there were any questions for the applicant.

Rasmussen asked with the homes on the 45-foot lots, do they have basements or are they slab-on-grade? Daily replied currently, we are planning to build those slab-on-grade in order to hit the price point for this market. Rasmussen stated my second question I think was answered by your last slide. I just want to confirm on the 65-foot lot widths that the rows will line up with the development, Graymont Village, that's under construction? Daily replied that's correct. Rasmussen stated I think I see that on your drawing now, so that looks good. Thank you.

Fisher asked so, will you build spec homes and then sell them, or will you sell them to individual people and then build as you sell? Daily replied currently Pulte does a mix of both. There are some spec homes, and then there's also some that are just some that are based off of consumers. Fisher stated okay, thank you.

Frazier stated I have one question for you; maybe if you go back to the slide where you have the zoomed-up picture of the northern half of the site. So, it was my understanding from the packet that the entire northern part was going to be 45-foot lots, but it looks like the western edge that kind of leads down to the southern edge of that northern half, are those all 65-foot, actually? Daily replied that is correct. The more orange ones are the 45-foot lots and then the kind of tan-yellow are the 65-foot lots. Frazier stated, all right, so, the 45-foot width lots are going to be kind of just to the northeast corner of that northern portion. Daily replied that is correct. Frazier stated understood, thank you.

Frazier opened the public hearing.

Bonnie Matter, 6649 Inskip Avenue South, stated I wish a copy of that plan would've been in with the meeting materials; so, maybe I can get a copy of that at some point. I just have a few questions: First of all, and I think I know the answer to it, it's just as I went through the materials, I was confused. There was the diagram of the residential housing, whether it was low, medium, high, and then there was another diagram on another page that was actually the zoning, and the color for the medium residential was the same color as the zoning. So, if that could be maybe a different color could be made for one, because I know it's all low density, correct? Frazier replied well, I think I recall from the presentation that right now, AG-2 is the zoning, so it's zoned Agricultural right now, but the Comprehensive Plan is a mix of different uses at this point. So, that's one of the applications is to amend the Comprehensive Plan, and then there's another application to amend the zoning, to come into conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. Matter stated okay, but it would be low density. Frazier replied that is I believe the application, yes. Matter stated okay, I just want to make sure I understand that correctly because there was a meeting in 2022, and it got bounced back because the request was for low and medium, and medium was not acceptable to the Met Council. And, so, I just want to make sure I understand that. Frazier said yes.

Matter stated that's #1. Okay, #2: I talked about the land use and the proposed zoning color designations. Are there wetlands on the property? Where is the stormwater ponding located, and is that a wetland, or is that new stormwater? There's a recreational trail on the west, bordering the Grey Cloud Scientific and Natural Area (SNA); what type of buffer area is planned between the property and the SNA? How will runoff be kept out of the SNA? When grading, how will runoff be kept out of the SNA? Can the trail be made from a permeable paving material vs. bituminous? Who educates the homeowners about proper use of an SNA, any SNA? Who keeps the dog poop, the lawn refuse, and other garbage away from and out of the SNA, what's the plan? Please provide the DNR contact notified with the current plans on June 17, 2024.

She noted that Pulte is requesting a Planned Unit Development (PUD); the City recently just changed the zoning on the R-4 to 45 feet. The objective was to eliminate the PUDs, but now Pulte is back for another PUD. What is Pulte providing the City for this PUD?

Matter stated let's see, Tree Preservation Plan: Calipers mean nothing to me, I'd like to know how many trees are actually being removed.

She requested that staff please submit the plans for this development to the appropriate representatives for review; that means like the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA), this is a very special area in this City, and also to the Grey Cloud Dunes SNA, Department of Natural Resources representative. And then I'd like to know what happens following this meeting. Those are my questions. Thank you very much.

No one else spoke. Frazier closed the public hearing.

Frazier asked which staff member would like to respond to Bonnie's questions. Jakes stated I'll just run through the comments provided by the public:

To begin with, the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning, that is correct, there are very similar colors. Just to clear things up, the Land Use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is what guides development and guides density. That's kind of your most broad overlay, and then within that, you have the Zoning District standards. So, those are two separate kind of overlays with similar colors. The medium density on screen is represented by the orange color, and then separately, within the Zoning District standards, the R-4 is represented by orange as well, so just a difference in the overlays of that. The previous proposal by Summergate Development did propose that northern section to be medium density; however, per comments from the Metropolitan Council, they did recommend low density based on the density of the project previously; the proposed density before you this evening is at 3 units per acre, so that does align better with the low density residential. That's why the application before you is low density and not medium density. Staff has been in contact with the Metropolitan Council on this application as well, and they were in agreement that low density was still the preferred guiding of that northern part of the site.

To touch on stormwater ponding, there are currently no wetlands on site. The stormwater ponds are proposed to be created with the development. There are four stormwater ponds: One on the southernmost section, that's within the MRCCA overlay district, and there is one along the west property boundary, and then two separate ones, with a dry pond on the north and wet pond to the south of that. So, four total stormwater ponds, no wetlands on the site, and no stormwater ponds would be created and graded with the development.

Along the west part of the site is the proposed recreational trail; I don't know the specific width on that Outlot, but that does provide the buffer that the DNR requested and a burn-break area that the DNR requested in their comment letter. Previously, in 2022, their comments included really two major things: 1) The preservation of mature trees along the western property boundary, adjacent to the SNA; 2) Adding and providing a trail on the western property boundary to act as a burn break. So, the applicant has attempted to mitigate those concerns through the preservation of trees along the majority of the western property boundary, and then again, that trail extending along the entire western property boundary; the previous application only had it about halfway along that western property boundary. In terms of runoff to the SNA, the applicant is required to have all water mitigated on site through their stormwater ponding and stormwater plan. In terms of notifying and working with residents on the SNA area and how that is to be treated, we'll work with the developer on that when new residents move in, giving them the information to make them aware of the SNA, what its meant to be, and we'll also communicate with the DNR on that as well. We'll all work together to ensure that residents are aware of that land and how that should be treated. The DNR was provided with a letter and a plan set for comments, and no comments were received at this time from the DNR.

In terms of tree preservation, 53.25 inches converts to about 11 additional trees that would be required if the applicant chooses to utilize the replacement method on site instead of the cash fee, which I believe they're intending to do at this point; so, they'll be planting those 11 additional trees.

After this meeting, the August 21 City Council Meeting is where these four applications will be heard.

Just to talk through the PUD proposal, as part of the annual Zoning Code updates, which was recently before you in May, the lot width within the R-4 District was reduced to 45 feet to minimize any PUD requests. However, the side yard setback was still kept at 7.5 feet, realizing that there's a variation of lot widths. So, staff did not necessarily want to require or allow for 65-foot lot widths to be closer to the property line than 12.5 feet separation between the two houses. So, keeping that 7.5 feet keeps your 12.5-foot setback on your 65-foot lots, and then, in turn, requires an applicant to request a PUD to reduce that for the 45-foot lot widths and require that extra application. So, we're really trying to balance the range of lot widths within that Transitional Zoning District is part of that Zoning District. Jakes stated I believe those were all the questions that were asked.

Frazier stated okay, I just have a couple that I wanted to clean up with you. The recreation trail, do we know what the proposal is for that, what is the makeup of that going to be; is it going to be like a paved trail or is it going to be like a crushed rock? Jakes replied right now, I believe it's proposed to be a paved trail along that western property boundary, similar to our other recreation trails throughout the City. Frazier stated okay, and it sounded like from what you were saying that the DNR had kind of asked for that plan as well, just because: A) For it to be a trail, but B) Because it then represents a fire break, just to make sure that their fire doesn't spread from the SNA to the houses or vice versa, right? Jakes replied yes, that's correct. Frazier stated the other thing I wanted to check is we talked about caliper inches, and I know you said that the amount of inches that they're going to have to recoup on property is about 11 trees; but the reason why we talk about caliper inches is because the City Ordinance is written in caliper inches, correct? Jakes replied yes, that's correct.

Frazier asked if there were any other questions for staff, but none were asked.

Fisher stated she just had one comment. She stated I think it's nice because we've seen a plan come through before on this property, and Matter had mentioned about the low density versus the medium density. So, it's nice to see a lower-density plan that will work than what we saw before. It's nice to take in what the Met Council says and then bring back a new plan that covers all those bases. I like that.

Rasmussen made a motion to approve the comprehensive plan amendment, zoning amendment, planned unit development, and preliminary plat for the proposed Preserve at Prairie Dunes subdivision, subject to the conditions stipulated in the staff report. Fisher seconded. Motion passed unanimously (5-to-0 vote).

7. APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF MAY 20, 2024

Brittain made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2024, Planning Commission meeting. Rasmussen seconded. Motion passed unanimously (5-to-0 vote).

8. REPORTS

8.1 RECAP OF JUNE AND JULY CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Schmitz provided a summary of actions taken at the June 5, June 26, and July 17, 2024, City Council meetings:

Khambata stated again, as always, I want to thank you guys for your dedication and time, and make myself available for any questions you have.

Frazier asked commissioners if they had any questions for Council Member Khambata.

Rasmussen stated I have a quick question on 70th Street, kind of east of Keats; there's that big utility-looking project going on. I can't figure out what's going on there; do you have any updates or clues? Schmitz replied you're not the first one to ask; I actually had to drive out there to see this for myself. It's quite fascinating. I don't know the details of exactly what is happening, but Northern Natural Gas has a substation, just on the north side of 70th there, across the way. Some new pipe work is happening, for which my understanding is they need a lot of water as they navigate; whatever this project is, again I don't know the details, but that's what's happening there, a staging area for a large amount of water to help with their new piping that they are putting in. Rasmussen stated it's interesting, they almost have like a little water, a mini water tower built or something. Schmitz stated yep, like a swimming pool; in Minnesota it makes sense, I guess.

Khambata stated he actually had a few more comments that just kind of came back to me. So, before we exit, I want to say since May, the City dealt with some pretty severe flooding; I think it's the eighth highest crest that's been recorded on the Mississippi. Because this is the Planning Commission and we deal with infrastructure, I thought it might be a good idea to just tell you that our Emergency Management Plan was utilized; our Public Works executed that plan very well. Two key pieces of infrastructure were at most risk, the causeway going onto Grey Cloud Island and the steel trellis bridge, also going onto Grey Cloud Island. During that time, it was being monitored multiple times a day, and we had Emergency Management protocols in place in order

to evacuate somebody should there be a medical emergency on the island. I just really want to applaud our staff on being forward thinking on that. Thankfully, the water crested before it did any permanent damage to either of those structures; they were both inspected and they're back in service.

Frazier stated all right, thank you for that update. Frazier asked if there were any other questions for Schmitz or Khambata, but none were asked.

8.2 RESPONSE TO PLANNING COMMISSION INQUIRIES

Schmitz stated we added a response, as we had some additional questions related to this community solar process, our existing projects. I'm hoping that memo kind of covered a little bit more detail that we were able to dig up as it relates to some of those initial questions. Of course, we can certainly add some clarification if needed at this point.

8.3 PLANNING COMMISSION REQUESTS - None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Rasmussen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brittain seconded. Motion passed unanimously (5-to-0 vote). The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.