

MINUTES
MOUNT VERNON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
AUGUST 9, 2017

The Mount Vernon Planning and Zoning Commission met August 9, 2017 at Mount Vernon City Hall Council Chambers with the following members present: Joan Burge Elliott, Matthew Nelson, Rich Hileman, Jenna Wischmeyer and Garret Reddish. Absent: Trude Elliott and Truman Jordan. Also in attendance, Zoning Administrator, Matt Siders, Chad Sands from ECICOG, Kyle Skogman with Midwest Development Company and Loren Hoffman with Hall and Hall Engineers. Meeting was called to order by Vice Chairperson Jenna Wischmeyer at 6:30 p.m.

1. Approval of Agenda and July 12, 2017 minutes. These documents stand approved unless otherwise indicated by Commission members. Siders stated that items three through five on the agenda would be removed as Conditional Use Permits would not be required. The public hearings were previously publicized but the City had discussions with the City Attorney about interpretations. After those discussions, it was determined that Conditional Use Permits were not required. It will follow the process of the building permit as well as Linn County review.
2. Open Forum: each citizen limited to 5 minutes per discussion item.
3. Public Hearing on request for Conditional Use Permit for solar panels at 760 Lisbon Road NE. Discussion and possible action. Deleted from agenda.
4. Public Hearing on request for Conditional Use Permit for solar panels at 213 1st Street NW. Discussion and possible action. Deleted from agenda.
5. Public Hearing on request for Conditional Use Permit for solar panels at 124 3rd Avenue NW. Discussion and possible action. Deleted from agenda.
6. Public Hearing on review of Spring Meadow Heights Addition. Discussion and possible action. Wischmeyer opened the public hearing and asked for input from the public. Kyle Skogman, President of Midwest Development Company (a subsidiary of Skogman Realty), addressed the commission and public. He provided copies of and went over the marketing plan and phase plan for the subdivision and the types of housing units that are being proposed. Copies of these forms can be picked up at City Hall. Because this is a large site, it would potentially be up to an eight year project before completion. Each phase would take 18 months to two years to complete. Five acres have also set aside for potential purchase by the City to expand their park land. Skogman also mentioned the value of the trees on the south side of the addition and stated that they would take care in preserving as many trees as possible. Loren Hoffman, representing Midwest Development Company with Hall and Hall Engineers as well as a resident of Mount Vernon, spoke about storm water management. He said there were three primary drainage ways that exit the site; one near Candlestick Drive,

one near 6th Street and one east of Elliott Park. They have been in contact with the City Engineer and discussed things that might be different in each of those areas with the basins.

Resident Mike Gates addressed the commission and stated that he lives downstream of this project. Just this past year he and his neighbors placed a tile in their yards for drainage. It surprises him that they want to run that water from the addition onto their properties that fast. Loren Hoffman said as the project progresses they would like to sit down with residents and address those concerns. Resident Julie Yeoman asked about trees located on their property on Wolfe Lane. She also asked when lots would be for sale and whether current property owners could purchase them and not build on them. Skogman said that there could potentially be lots for sale in the first phase about a year and half and it would be up to the person that purchases the properties whether they wish to build on them. Resident Jim Wallace lives in the Candlestick addition and his lot backs up against this development. His question is what kind of concern is going to be given to the process of running a storm sewer through the utility easement that is there. He has a 35 year old oak tree that is right on the edge of that easement and wondered if it was possible to limit damage to trees in that area. He also asked about how much grading was going to be done on the entire site. Skogman said they would gladly meet with him onsite to address his concern. Skogman also said their process for grading was that they would come in and scrape off the top soil and stockpile it. They will do the grading necessary so there is proper drainage for the new units as well as current structures around it and the top soil is eventually re-spread.

Resident John Rife, Candlestick Drive, asked about which streets would be done first or whether they would be done all at once. Skogman said that the streets would be completed in the phases of the project. Rife said he hoped that the project would enhance the neighborhoods around it and sees some positive things with the addition. Resident Susan Brust, Candlestick Drive, asked what the rest of the development would look like once Phase One has started. Skogman said that once the grading was complete they would re-seed all phases except the phase that was being worked on. It would be maintained and mowed on a regular basis. Resident Sara Rife-Patten said she was shocked by how many houses were on the plat and felt that it was too congested and would like to see it smaller and fit in better with the neighborhood around it. She is also concerned about safety and the amount of traffic that will go through Candlestick Drive. She would like to see some type of traffic study done. She said that any new development should not be a burden to the people that already live there. Resident Jay Willems lives in the Stonebrook Addition and said the need for new residential housing is critical for the community. One observation he has is to require the street lights to be a little higher and shed a little more light. He also asked if this was going to strictly be a Skogman development and only Skogman was allowed to build or will other area builders have an opportunity to do so. Skogman said they intend to sell some of the lots for other builders that are interested in building. Hunter Skogman then spoke and said the goal for this project was to bring as many people to the area as possible with many different price points and give everyone an opportunity to build. Deb Herrmann, Wolfe Lane, would like to try and retain the openness of the

area and keep properties “custom built”. She also asked if there would be minimum expectations of the types of homes being built or landscaping requirements. She wondered what accommodations would be made for safe travel of school kids. Excessive street lighting and tree damage is also a concern for her. Skogman said with respect to street lighting that is normally a City ordinance requirement. Skogman also said that they work hard on the quality of the homes and elevations and they work with architects to construct several different “semi custom” homes. He also said there are covenants with every plat that is done and is approved by the City when the final plat is complete. Mark Platte, 6th Street, said that it appears as though 6th Street would be the busiest street according to the plat. A major concern he has is the storm water retention. Another concern is the access coming into Phase One and asked if Candlestick could be opened up as well or have another access. Adam Pyatt, Turtle Dove Lane, suggested a northern access from the railroad area for construction equipment. He also suggested building a school in the area and wondered what the school districts plan was for this type of growth.

City Administrator, Chris Nosbisch, said that the storm water issue is a concern that would be discussed further with the developer and they will also try to alleviate as much traffic as possible. The park space will be more of a neighborhood park and the Elliott area would be more ball field areas added on. Nosbisch said that he has had discussions with the school district and they are aware of the proposed subdivision. There was a concern voiced about small children in the area and what safety measures would be taken during the construction process. Nosbisch said that police presence would increase and there will be increased discussions with the developer and engineers on how to control traffic. Nosbisch explained that Planning and Zoning would make a recommendation to Council to approve the preliminary plat and there is a developer’s agreement that would be approved as well. The final plat would then be approved by Planning and Zoning and Council. Once the final plat is approved the developer could begin work. There would be a final plat approval process for each phase of the project. A resident on Wolfe Lane voiced concern about the water runoff in that area. Nosbisch said he would be happy to meet with people in the area to discuss their concerns. Brett Kim, 6th Street, asked what percentage of the first phase would be completed before they would begin on the next phase of the project. Kyle Skogman said as a rule of thumb, the next phase would begin once 70% of the lots in the first phase were sold. Skogman also said that they have had numerous discussion with the City on the storm water issues and are willing to do more than required to address the concerns.

With no further public input, Wischmeyer closed the public hearing and asked for any discussion from commission members. Wischmeyer said from a procedural standpoint, there are checklists and different criteria of what needs to be in a preliminary plat. She pointed out that there was not a letter of support from the City Attorney but felt that this could be taken care of before the plat went to City Council. Siders said that all parties have been involved in the planning meetings. Wischmeyer said that there was a lot of good discussion tonight and some of the concerns that were voiced would be addressed in the next phase of the process.

The role of Planning and Zoning is to confirm that what is proposed is allowed in the zoning ordinance. Matt Nelson asked about the sizes of the houses and where they are located on the properties, as well as design standards. He feels this is something that should be taken into consideration. Siders said that as far as the sizes and location of the houses, as long as they are meeting the requirements for the subdivision regulations and the zoning ordinance, they would be approved. Nelson asked if the plats that are approved would be grandfathered in if any changes are made to the zoning ordinance or design standards. Siders said any structures would need to adhere to whatever is in place for the current zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. Nelson also asked about when paving for each phase would take place. Skogman said that the paving would only be done as each phase is complete. Nelson said in the current ordinance it states that the City should avoid or reduce unnecessary impervious surfaces. He is wondering if in Phase Four, it is necessary to build what appears to be a street going to the east towards Lisbon. Skogman said that a lot of communities would have a right-of-way put there and would grass it over but keep it there as an option in the future. He feels that as an owner of a property, this would seem like an unfinished dead end. Hileman felt that these are essentially a “street to nowhere” and would end up being a permanent dead end street. He asked how much this was talked about in the planning process and why are we designing this part of Mount Vernon on the assumption that someday Lisbon will have a subdivision that will hook up to this. Siders said there was some discussion about the possibility of Skogman developing further to the east. Loren Hoffman said that if this isn’t put in the plat there is potential of issues with property owners to the east if that area was developed. Wischmeyer said that if commission members felt strongly about this issue, they could make a recommendation to Council when the plat is approved to not slow down the process. Nelson also went on to say that the streets and connectivity between neighborhoods in this development did not fit in with the rest of Mount Vernon and the houses being proposed did not fit in with what he felt was the character of the rest of Mount Vernon. Commission member, Garrett Reddish, asked if damages were done to existing streets during construction of the project how this would be handled. Hileman said this issue should be addressed in the developer’s agreement that the City approves. Hileman asked Skogman about the “dead end” streets that have been discussed and whether these could be re-designed so that it was more contained in Mount Vernon. Skogman said that what cities have done is leave the right-of-way but don’t put the street in so that it doesn’t look like a dead end street.

With no further discussion from commission members, Hileman made a motion to approve the preliminary plat as presented with the understanding that the engineer and attorney report will be supplied to Council before they consider it. Motion seconded by Burge. Voting yes: Hileman, Reddish, Wischmeyer and Burge. Voting no: Nelson. Motion carries.

7. Discussion and possible action of proposed Zoning Ordinance changes. Sands provided information from Galena and Waverly and what they do with portable signs. Galena allows portable signs on premise, not off premise. Waverly does not allow portable signs at all. It was the opinion of Matt Siders and Sands that only

allowing on premise (where you are conducting business) portable signs would be easier to enforce. Siders also said that there is something in the current zoning ordinance that allows businesses to have up to 40 inches in front of their buildings. Due to time constraints, commission members will discuss this item in more detail at the next meeting in September. At the October meeting the zoning map will be discussed with a possible public hearing on the ordinance in November.

8. Zoning Administrator Report. Nothing to report.

9. Old Business.

10. New Business. Commission members welcomed new member Garret Reddish.

Meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marsha Dewell
Deputy Clerk