

GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
January 10, 2023, 5:30 PM
MINUTES

The meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 5:33 p.m. by Commissioner Teske.

Those present were Planning Commissioners; Andrew Teske, Ken Scissors, Kimberly Herek, Sandra Weckerly, Shanon Secrest, JB Phillips, and Melanie Duyvejonck.

Also present were Jamie Beard (City Attorney), Felix Landry (Planning Supervisor), Dave Thornton (Principal Planner), Nicole Galehouse (Principal Planner), Scott Peterson (Senior Planner), Dani Acosta (Senior Planner), and Jacob Kaplan (Planning Technician).

There were 28 members of the public in attendance, and 2 virtually.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Previous Meeting(s) from December 13, 2022.

2. Eagle Estates Extension Request

SUB-2017-605

Consider a Request by Normal Brothers, LLC to Extend for One-Year until January 11, 2024 the Conditional Administrative Approval to Record the Plat for Eagle Estates, 10 Lots on 5.44 acres in an R-2 (Residential-2 du/ac) zone district.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Grand Valley Estates Annexation

ANX-2022-478

Consider a request by Grand Junction Venture LLC to zone 17.42 acres from County Residential Single Family – 4 (RSF-4) to R-12 (Residential – 12 du/ac) located at the northeast corner of 31 Road and E ½ Road.

Staff Presentation

Nicole Galehouse, Principal Planner, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request. Additionally, she gave a brief history of the public notice activities for this item.

Applicant Ty Johnson was present and available for questions/comments.

Commissioner Secrest made the following motion “I’ll make a motion to approve that the proper notification was provided.”

Commissioner Scissors seconded; motion passed 7-0.

Questions for staff

Commissioner Weckerly asked staff to elaborate on the portion of the presentation pertaining to road improvements.

Commissioner Scissors asked the applicant what the advantages of zoning R-12 are.

Commissioner Teske asked the applicant why they were requesting R-12 instead of the previously requested R-8 zoning.

Public Hearing

The public hearing was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 3, 2023, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

Carroll Aamold remarked on the downsides of the site for development. Specifically, he noted the potential flooding issues from Lewis Wash, the increased traffic/parking issues, and safety for pedestrians trying to cross on E ½ Road.

Stuart Foster commented that the R-12 zone designation would be incompatible with the existing surrounding land uses. He also spoke about the current safety and traffic issues on E ½ Road that may be exacerbated by development. He mentioned the neighborhoods near Colorado Mesa University and noted the differences in character between those neighborhoods and the one in question.

R. C. Buckley introduced a petition opposing the development and spoke about the lack of notification. He noted that the nearest development that matched the size of the one proposed was 3 miles away. He wondered why the acreage of the parcel was increasing over time and compared the proposed number of units for the site with that of the Eastbrook subdivision.

Rosemary Bonine requested that the property be annexed to R-5. She stated that E ½ Road is currently the 3rd largest route for east-west bound traffic and that it is not currently wide enough for turn lanes, sidewalks, and paths. She said the existing infrastructure and amenities are overwhelmed and wondered if police/fire would be able to keep up with the potential rise in crime. She pointed to “East States Garden Orchards” as reason to change the zoning to R-5.

Rod Hoover commented that 31 Road had been planned to be relocated on the East side of Lewis Wash. He said that he had not heard anything about a roundabout at 31 Road and E ½ Road and expressed that he would like to be better informed in the future. He brought up that the owner of the property across E1/2 Road was waiting to see what the plan was for the property in question, and worried that another large development might follow suit.

Lisa Cothrun requested that the planning commissioners visit Long’s Park. She mentioned that there was wildlife inhabiting Lewis Wash and asked that the developer factor that into their plans.

Marc Baker commented that he wasn’t particularly concerned about an R-8 zoning but was worried about the impact and R-12 zoning might have. He remarked on the size and location of the public notice sign.

Joe Jones brought up the importance of the quality of life in Grand Junction and the impact this subdivision would have. He also spoke about the existing traffic problems in the area.

Dave Dearborn questioned the noticing distance for properties adjacent to the proposed subdivision. He echoed concerns of car accidents at 31 and E ½ Road due to increased traffic.

Labecca Jones spoke with the Audobahn society on the endangered wildlife in the area. She also expressed concerns about the proximity of the new development to Lewis Wash and the dangers it could pose to children and pets.

Scott Rafferty listed a number of accidents he has seen along 31 Road and at the intersection with E ½ Road. He expressed that he would like to see development of single-family homes instead of apartments.

Miles Cothrun noted that 31 Road is the main thoroughfare for traffic moving from Patterson to E ½ Road. He commented on the noise and crime at Long's Park. He also commented on the views from his property.

The public hearing was closed at 7:10 p.m. on January 10, 2023.

Discussion

Applicant Ty Johnson noted that there are pending improvements to 31 Road and E ½ Road. He also noted that there would be an in-depth site plan review prior to any development. He reiterated that the R-12 zone is more desirable than R-8 given the relaxed lot requirements and the site's proximity to amenities. He noted that there is a housing shortage in Grand Junction, and this development would provide many new units for residents.

Commissioner Weckerly inquired about the "sliver" of the parcel as shown on the staff presentation. She requested confirmation that the 31 Road improvements would occur through development of the adjacent properties. She wondered whether the City or County would be responsible for completion of 31 Road improvements. She reiterated that the R-12 zone does not allow for Single-Family detached homes. She listed the approval criteria and elaborated on the ways in which the development met or did not meet them.

Commissioner Duyvejonck asked about the proposed 31 Road extension. She said she the "efficient and connective transportation" would be worth more consideration if the improvements to 31 Road continued all the way to Patterson. She expressed agreement with the community that the new development would not be compatible with the surrounding area. She noted that the existing infrastructure didn't necessarily support development of this kind.

Commissioner Scissors asked what the West boundary of the property is. He spoke to the abundance of public input about the R-12 zoning and their arguments that it would not be compatible with the existing development. He asked what the specific difference in max building

height was between R-8 and R-12. He expressed agreement with the community that the new development would not be compatible with the surrounding area.

Commissioner Phillips asked if the plan was to build 31 Road on top of Lewis Wash. He mentioned that there are many new drivers on 31 Road and E ½ Road due to the proximity to Central High School. He talked about the high crime rate at Long's Park and the surrounding area. He was skeptical that this development would provide people a reason to take alternative forms of transportation. He wondered if the site did not meet the "efficient and connective transportation" standards as stated in the staff presentation. He brought up safety concerns for children crossing E ½ Road to attend the proposed charter school to the South.

Commissioner Herek inquired as to how the City/County ensured that the proposed 31 Road improvements continued beyond the Northern lot line of the property in question. She echoed Commissioner Weckerly's concerns about accountability between the City and County over 31 Road improvements. She said one of the main reasons she did not support the annex to R-12 was its inability to allow single-family homes.

Commissioner Secrest reiterated some of the concerns stated by the other Commissioners and expressed agreement with the community that the new development would not be compatible with the surrounding area.

Development Engineer Rick Dorris spoke about the current plan for improvements to 31 Road. He stated that improvements to 31 Road would likely occur via the Traffic Impact studies/fees as a result of development.

Commissioner Teske mentioned that many of the issues brought up by the public would be addressed during site plan review. He noted that the 2020 One Grand Junction Plan was drafted with community input and one of the main considerations was combatting the housing shortage.

Assistant City Attorney Jamie Beard responded to Commissioner questions.

Felix Landry explained some of the planning considerations around crime and traffic.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Scissors made the following motion "Mr. Chairman, on the Zone of Annexation request for the property located at the northeast corner of 31 Road and E ½ Road, City file number ANX-2022-478, I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to City Council with the findings of fact as listed in the staff report."

Commissioner Secrest seconded; motion failed 1-6.

2. Roy's RV Annexation

ANX-2021-770

Consider a request by Roy A. Laplante, III, to zone 1.45 acres from County RSF-R (Residential Single Family Rural - one dwelling per five acres) to City I-1 (Light Industrial) located at 2795 Riverside Parkway.

Staff Presentation

Dani Acosta, Senior Planner, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Representative Eric Slivon was present and available for questions.

Questions for staff

Public Hearing

The public hearing was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 3, 2023, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

The public hearing was closed at 8:06 p.m. on January 10, 2023.

Discussion

Commissioner Teske inquired why the preceding annexation (Grand Valley Estates) met the criteria whereas the current item did not.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Scissors made the following motion “Mr. Chairman, on the Zone of Annexation for the Roy’s RV Annexation to I-1 (Light Industrial) zone district, file number ANX-2021-770, I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to City Council with the findings of fact as listed in the staff report.”

Commissioner Secrest seconded; motion passed 7-0.

3. Casas de Luz Unit 4 Building Height Amendment PLD-2022-824

Consider a request by Casas Land Partners LLC, to Amend Ordinance 4482 for the Casa de Luz Planned Development to adjust the maximum building height for only Unit 4 from 24’ to 34’, located at 365 W. Ridges Boulevard.

Staff Presentation

Due to a potential conflict of interest, Commissioner Teske recused himself from deliberating on the item.

Scott Peterson, Senior Planner, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Representative Mike Stubbs was present and available for questions.

Questions for staff

Commissioner Weckerly asked where max building elevation is measured from. She also asked for confirmation that the building heights would not be further increased in the future.

Commissioner Scissors reaffirmed that the proposed building height amendment would not increase the overall building height. He inquired as to the topography of the site and the impact of this amendment on the solar efficiency of the sites to the North.

Representative Mike Stubbs elaborated on the request and responded to the commissioner's questions and comments.

Public Hearing

The public hearing was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 3, 2023, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

Ulrike Magdalenski expressed the challenges that the current Casas de Luz development has brought about and her concern about future building height increases.

Christine Tuthill mentioned the previous covenants restrictions on building heights and viewsheds to maintain aesthetics. She also noted the status of projects under construction in the surrounding area.

Russ Carson requested better methods for indicating to residents what the proposed developments will look like prior to construction.

Kendra Samart spoke about the passive solar heating for the properties to the North of the proposed development and how the new buildings could block sunlight from reaching their homes.

Representative Mike Stubbs remarked that the public comments did not pertain to the amendment in question.

The public hearing was closed at 8:44 p.m. on January 10, 2023.

Discussion

Commissioner Weckerly agreed that the buildings do look larger from the road given the drastic slope of the site. She also agreed that the buildings did have a negative impact on the aesthetic of the area, however the buildings were already approved and to deny the proposed amendment would seem like a punishment to the developer.

Commissioner Secrest echoed the comments of Commissioner Weckerly.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Phillips made the following motion "Mr. Chairman, on the request to Amend Ordinance 4482 for the Casa de Luz Planned Development to adjust the maximum building height for only Unit 4 from 24' to 34', I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to City Council with the findings of fact as listed in the staff report."

Commissioner Herek seconded; motion passed 6-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Felix Landry noted that this would be Scott Peterson's last Planning Commission Hearing before his retirement.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Scissors moved to adjourn the meeting.

The vote to adjourn was 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.