

GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
February 14, 2023, 5:30 PM
MINUTES

The meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Commissioner Teske.

Those present were Planning Commissioners; Ken Scissors, Kimberly Herek, Shanon Secrest, JB Phillips, Keith Ehlers, and Melanie Duyvejonck.

Also present were Jamie Beard (City Attorney), Felix Landry (Planning Supervisor), Nicole Galehouse (Principal Planner), and Jacob Kaplan (Planning Technician).

There were 30 members of the public in attendance, and 4 virtually.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Previous Meeting(s) from January 10, 2023.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Vista 5 LLP Rezone

RZN-2022-845

Consider a request by Vista 5, LLP, Property Owner, to rezone 17.37 acres from R-1 (Residential – 1 du/ac) to R-5 (Residential – 5.5 du/ac) located at 2428 H Road.

Staff Presentation

Felix Landry, Planning Supervisor, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Applicant Nate Porter was present and available for questions/comments.

Questions for staff

Commissioner Scissors asked what the implications of the proposed changes to the Zoning and Development Code would mean for this rezone to R-5.

Public Hearing

The public hearing was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 7, 2023, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

Bob Fuoco wondered if the increased density was completely necessary in this area. He stated that the City needed to maintain an inventory of lower density housing.

Dan Komlo stated that the proposed R-5 density would not be compatible with the character of the neighborhood. He listed his disagreements with the staff's findings.

Sarah Bajorek commented that the presentation wasn't an accurate representation of the surrounding area. She expressed concerns about neighbors moving away due to the increased density. She proposed an alternative location for the development. She is also concerned about the lack of sidewalks in the area coupled with the increase in foot traffic for children heading to Appleton Elementary. Finally, she stated her concerns about the potential reduction in property values for the surrounding area.

Craig Moulton noted that the character of the area was rural and that this development would impact property values.

Jim Marshall stated that all of the surrounding parcels were agricultural.

Dave Zolner stated that the proposed density would be 5-25x higher than the surrounding area. He listed various sections of the code pertaining to expanding housing options, protecting unique character, and identifying compatible land uses. He expressed concerns about future development on his own property.

Greg Tamburello noted the characteristics of rural communities and stated that the Planning Department should work with residents to preserve this heritage. He stated that the proposed development would increase noise pollution, create a sense of overcrowding, and decrease nearby property values.

Tyler Mundy stated the controversial nature of a "flagpole" annexation. He noted that all of the surrounding roads were County roads and that they were in disrepair. He also stated that 24 1/4 Road is actually on the deed of his grandmother's property and questioned whether it could be classified as a public road. Lastly, he argued that development does not always facilitate infrastructure improvements and gave the 25 Road corridor between Patterson and I-70 as an example.

Shiloh White stated that compatibility with a city planner "wish list" does not constitute an invalidating event. She echoed concerns that the available services are inadequate to properly support a housing development of the proposed size.

Andrew Bajorek stated that the claim that this area was close to urbanizing was not backed by measurable evidence. He echoed other's concerns about poor road conditions and walkability, proximity to amenities, and reduction in property values.

Mike Johnson brought up the poor condition of H Road and the increase in traffic this development would bring.

Nyann Davis expressed concerns with water scarcity in the area. She noted that H Road and Appleton Elementary are not currently in a state to accommodate the increased population this development would bring.

Nate Molse noted the lack of sidewalks in the area and that it was currently unsafe for foot traffic.

Cynthia Komlo asked if the Commissioners had visited the site or had ever tried to walk through the double roundabout on 24 Road and encouraged them to do so.

The public hearing was closed at 6:28 p.m. on February 14, 2023.

Discussion

Representative, Ivan Geer, spoke on the proximity of available amenities to the proposed development. He spoke about the impact fees developers pay to reduce the impact of development. Lastly, he noted that enrollment rates were declining and that D-51 is considering closing schools.

Development Engineer, Rick Dorris, commented on the conditions of the surrounding area.

Commissioner Scissors asked why the applicant was requesting R-5 instead of R-4.

Applicant, Nate Porter, said that the R-5 zoning offered increased flexibility for housing options. He stated that they were not considering duplexes or multi-family development at the moment.

Commissioner Ehlers addressed the questions about what had changed between now and when the property was rezoned in 2019. He spoke about the community benefits of development and noted that compatibility does not mean uniformity when it comes to housing options. Additionally, he noted that this rezone would not have an impact on what current property owners were allowed to do on their land.

Commissioner Herek agreed with Commissioner Ehlers that this rezone met the requirements as outlined in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Secrest commented that property values may actually increase as there would be more housing and lot size options in the area. He noted the challenges for developers when designing attainable and desirable homes. Lastly, he wondered where development occur if not here.

Commissioner Scissors stated that the R-5 development did not match the character of the surrounding area and that future road improvements are probably a long way away. He noted the necessity for available and affordable housing, but that there are likely better locations for development closer to town.

Commissioner Duyvejonck noted that R-5 is still considered “low density”.

Commissioner Phillips noted that the current roadways did not accommodate foot traffic or walkability.

Commissioner Teske noted the importance of upholding the comprehensive plan. He noted that historically new developments have not matched the increase in population density and that minimum densities had to be introduced.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Phillips made the following motion “Mr. Chairman, on the Rezone request for the property located at 2428 H Road, City file number RZN-2022-845, I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the City Council with the findings of fact as listed in the staff report.”

Commissioner Secrest seconded; motion passed 6-1.

OTHER BUSINESS

A good Samaritan had turned in a set of keys.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Scissors moved to adjourn the meeting.
The vote to adjourn was 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.