

GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
January 23, 2024, 5:30 PM
MINUTES

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

Those present were Planning Commissioners; Shanon Secrest, Ken Scissors, Keith Ehlers, and Kim Herek (virtual).

Also present were Jamie Beard (City Attorney), Niki Galehouse (Planning Supervisor), Dani Acosta Stine (Senior Planner), Dave Thornton (Principal Planner), Madeline Robinson (Planning Technician), and Jacob Kaplan (Planning Technician).

There were 54 members of the public in attendance, and 2 virtually.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Previous Meeting(s) from January 9, 2024.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Riverfront at Dos Rios ODP

PLD-2023-581

Consider a request by DR Land LLC, DR Townhomes LLC, Buena Vida HQ, LLC, and the City of Grand Junction to amend the Planned Development Zoning and Outline Development Plan (ODP) for the Riverfront at Dos Rios, located on the northeast bank of the Colorado River between Highway 50 and Hale Avenue.

Staff Presentation

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

Tess Williams with May Riegler provided a brief update on the status of the development and were available to answer questions.

Questions for staff

Commissioner Ehlers confirmed that the applicant was on board with the proposed amendments to the PD ordinance.

Public Hearing

The public comment period was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 16, 2024, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

There were no public comments.

The public comment period was closed at 5:58 p.m. on January 23, 2024.

Discussion

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Scissors made the following motion “Chairman, on the request for the amendment to the Planned Development zone district and Outline Development Plan (ODP) for Riverfront at Dos Rios Located on the Northeast Bank of the Colorado River Between Highway 50 and Hale Avenue, City file number PLD-2023-581, 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 6-0.

2. Aspire Residential Rezone

RZN-2024-12

Consider a request by Ken Co LLC to rezone 7.102 acres from R-4 (Residential - 4 du/ac) to R-24 (Residential – 24 du/ac).

Staff Presentation

Dave Thornton, Principal Planner, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Questions for staff

Commissioner Ehlers asked if this development would require a traffic study to be completed.

Public Hearing

The public comment period was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 16, 2024, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

There were no public comments.

The public comment period was closed at 6:12 p.m. on January 23, 2024.

Discussion

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Secrest made the following motion “Mr. Chairman, on the Rezone requests for a 7.11 acre rezone from R-4 (Residential - 4 du/ac) to R-24 (Residential – 24 du/ac) located at 2651 Stacy Drive, a request by the owner Ken Co LLC and applicant Aspire Residential, City file number RZN-2024-12, 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 Ehlers seconded; motion passed 6-0.

3. Vista 5 LLP Rezone

RZN-2023-555

Consider a request by Vista 5, LLP 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.

Commissioner Secrest addressed the public requests for his recusal from this item.

The other Commissioners stated they had no concerns over Commissioner Secrest hearing the item.

Staff Presentation

Niki Galehouse, Planning Supervisor, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Nate Porter, owner of the parcel, provided some quotes by City Council members in support of development of affordable housing.

Ivan Geer with River City Consulting provided a presentation on the request and was available for questions.

Questions for staff

Public Hearing

The public comment period was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 16, 2024, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

Bob Fuoco stated that in 2019, City Council zoned the parcel to R-1. He noted that the subject property is completely surrounded by Mesa County and is not contiguous with the Persigo district. He argued that this rezone would reduce available stock for low density development. He commented that the area is unsafe for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Donna Aubert raised concerns about the increased strain on Appleton Elementary School.

Jim Marshall spoke on the approval criteria for the rezone and gave his reasoning for disagreeing with City staff's findings.

Meryl Wyatt stated that affordable housing is not as beneficial in the long term as attainable housing. He stated that Grand Junction needs to build more housing at all densities.

Dan Komlo stated that all of the previous applications for this project had strong opposition from the neighboring residents. He stated that this rezone is inconsistent with the character of the area. He stated that there is a lack of safe pedestrian connections across I70.

Larry Tice stated his opposition to the increased density.

Christi Reece expressed her support for the rezone noting the communities need for higher density housing developments.

Shiloh White stated she was open to development of the parcel, but only at the R-1 density. She provided statistics on consumer preferences for housing. She noted that there are high density developments nearby, but that kind of development did not fit the character of this area. She argued that other boundaries already exist besides the Urban Development Boundary (UDB).

Pat Page noted that if all the parcels in the area developed as R-1, it would be a 1000% increase in the density of the area. He argued that this area had intrinsic value for the variety of housing options in Grand Junction.

Dave Zollner quoted one of the commissioners on their opinion of the development. He said that the UDB is not a good indicator for development and that proximity does not necessarily mean it matches the character. He stated his complaints about the flagpole annexation and public noticing. He argued that this development is not infill and provided context from the 2020 One Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan (2020 Comp Plan) to support his claims.

Tyler Mundy argued that R-5 is not low density. He brought up the current state of H Rd and that the development would not be accessible by a City street. He expressed that if H Rd is supposed to be a major thoroughfare, the 24 ½ and 25 Rd bridges should be improved as well.

Ed Butterfield stated that he moved to the Grand Junction due to the diversity of housing options.

Cynthia Komlo disagreed with the quotes provided by Nate Porter. She argued that affordable housing did not currently exist in the area and should not be developed there in the future.

Ivan Geer stated that the UDB was the extent of annexation for the City. He noted that enrollment was declining for schools.

Nate Porter clarified his definition of affordable vs. attainable housing, and that he had nothing to do with the rezone of the property in 2019.

Commissioner Ehlers clarified that City Council approved the rezone to R-1 before the adoption of the 2020 Comp Plan. He asked if the proposed designation of H Rd as an arterial road was under current traffic volumes or projected future volumes. He asked how the character and condition of the area had changed since the last time this project was presented to the Planning Commission. He asked if there were any roads, other than H Rd and 24 Rd, that were slated for improvement in the area.

The public comment period was closed at 7:34 p.m. on January 23, 2024.

Discussion

Commissioner Ehlers thanked the community members for their participation and quality of feedback and presentations they provided. He commented on his familiarity with the area. He provided some context on the delineation of the UDB and the importance of public input in its implementation. He noted that the R-1 zoning was not in alignment with the 2020 Comp Plan and that it is the owner's right to develop their property as they choose, provided it is in alignment with the 2020 Comp Plan.

Commissioner Duyvejonck thanked the community members for their participation and that their feedback was taken into consideration. She noted that the Commission's decision has to be based on future development and that it is easier to be proactive with development.

Commissioner Scissors thanked the community members for their participation. He noted that the Planning Commission was entertaining a request to rezone the property, not to amend the 2020 Comp Plan. He noted that the request aligned with the 2020 Comp Plan. He addressed his previous comment on compatibility of this development and that he still did not see it, but that there were adequate amenities and services presently available to accommodate the development.

Commissioner Secrest thanked the community members for their participation. He noted that what neighborhoods want and what the community wants aren't always in alignment and that the Commission needed to consider the 2020 Comp Plan first and foremost. He mentioned that what constitutes "affordable" is often subjective.

Commissioner Herek echoed the comments made by the other commissioners.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Ehlers made the following motion "Mr. Chairman, on the Rezone request for the property located at 2428 H Road, City file number RZN-2023-555, 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 6-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Scissors moved to adjourn the meeting.

The vote to adjourn was 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.