

GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
June 11, 2024, 5:30 PM
MINUTES

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

Those present were Planning Commissioners; Ken Scissors, Shanon Secrest, Kim Herek, Sandra Weckerly, Keith Ehlers, and Ian Moore.

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

There were 33 members of the public in attendance, and 1 virtually.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Previous Meeting(s) from May 14, 2024.

Commissioner Scissors moved to approve the consent agenda.

Commissioner Weckerly seconded; motion passed 7-0.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Circulation Plan, Comp Plan & Neighborhood Plan Amendments **CPA-2024-265**

Consider a Request by City Community Development Department Staff to (1) Amend the Grand Junction Circulation Plan; (2) Amend the One Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan; and (3) Retire the Orchard Mesa Neighborhood Plan, Pear Park Neighborhood Plan, and Redlands Area Plan. **This item was continued to the June 25 Planning Commission Hearing.**

2. Sawmill Rezone **RZN-2024-236**

Consider a request by the City of Grand Junction, Property Owner, to rezone a total of 14.38 acres from I-2 (Industrial General) and P-1 (Public Parks and Open Space) to MU-2 (Mixed-Use Light Commercial) with 11.96 acres of the total acreage located at the southwest corner of Winters Avenue and Riverside Parkway intersection including 1441 Winters Avenue, the parcel abutting 1441 Winters Avenue on the east that is bordered by Riverside Parkway on the east and the south, and the parcel abutting 1441 Winters Avenue on the south with the southern border being the Riverside Parkway, and an additional parcel containing 2.42 acres of the total acreage at the northwest corner of the Winters Avenue and Riverside Parkway intersection.

Staff Presentation

Thomas Lloyd, Senior Planner, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Public Hearing

The public comment period was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 4, 2024, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

Greg Gouth asked if a Traffic Impact Study had been conducted for this intersection. He expressed concerns about the introduction of residential uses into an otherwise commercial and industrial area.

Hollis Krenines asked why the City was developing the parcel instead of a private agency. She agreed that this was not an area for residential development.

Commissioner Weckerly asked why only a portion of the parcel was being rezoned.

Chairman Teske asked if the portion to be rezoned was accurately described.

The public comment period was closed at 6:10 p.m. on June 11, 2024.

Discussion

Commissioner Ehlers noted that this rezone aligned with the Comprehensive Plan. He encouraged the public to continue their participation as the property developed and continue to question the City's capacity to develop land.

Commissioner Secrest provided some context about the development of the site and that a traffic impact study would not be completed until a use/building had been proposed and that tonight's hearing was a request to rezone the property.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Ehlers made the following motion "Mr. Chairman, on the Rezone request for the parcels located at the southwest corner of Winters Avenue and Riverside Parkway intersection including 1441 Winters Avenue, the parcel abutting 1441 Winters Avenue on the east that is bordered by Riverside Parkway on the east and the south, and the parcel abutting 1441 Winters Avenue on the south with the southern border being the Riverside Parkway, and an additional parcel containing 2.42 acres of the total acreage at the northwest corner of the Winters Avenue and Riverside Parkway intersection, City file number RZN-2024-236, 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 7-0.

3. American Lutheran Church CPA & Rezone

CPA-2024-143 & RZN-2024-144

Consider a request by American Lutheran Church for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment for 6.56 acres from Residential Low (2 to 5.5 du/ac) to Residential Medium (5.5 to 12 du/ac) and rezone the 6.56 acres from Residential 1 Retired (R-1R) to RM-8 (Residential Medium - 8).

Chairman Teske recused himself from deliberating on this item.

Staff Presentation

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

Questions for staff and applicant

Commissioner Weckerly asked if cluster provisioning would be allowed through the rezone. She asked if the property would need to be subdivided prior to the rezone. She asked if the Mixed Use landuse designations allowed residential uses and why the parcels zoned MU-1 and MU-2 were not included in the counts for residential properties in the City. She challenged Staff's interpretation that the Comp Plan Amendment to Residential Medium was necessary to improve affordability of the subsequent properties.

Commissioner Ehlers asked if the density calculation would be evaluated for the whole 6.5-acre parcel or if it only considered the ~2 acres where the residences would be developed. He asked for clarification on the bulk standards for multifamily development in an R-5 zone district.

Commissioner Secrest asked about site access.

Aaron Young with Kaart Planning gave a brief presentation and was available for questions.

Commissioner Ehlers asked why the parcel was not subdivided prior to the request for a comp plan amendment and rezone.

Commissioner Weckerly asked if there was enough flexibility in the current code to create cottage courts under an RL-4 or RL-5 zone designation.

Commissioner Moore asked if the intention was to subdivide the parcel prior to development. He asked if the code allowed the property to be developed at RM-8 density for the whole parcel prior to being subdivided.

Commissioner Secrest speculated on the future development should the parcel be rezoned to RM-8.

Commissioner Scissors asked if the church would still have some say in the development of the parcel once it had been subdivided from the larger acreage.

David Miller with American Lutheran Church spoke on the church's desire for the future development of the land and all the considerations leading up to this request. He indicated that Housing Resources of Western Colorado (HRWC) was the tentative buyer of the future ~2-acre parcel and that their intent was to provide attainable housing through a cottage court style development.

Commissioner Ehlers asked what the tentative unit count was for the development. He asked Mr. Miller why the church was not developing the parcel themselves.

David Miller responded that the church needed the money from the sale of the land to help pay the church's mortgage.

Commissioner Weckerly asked if the City had previously amended the comp plan to increase residential density on a parcel.

Commissioner Scissors asked staff for context as to why they did not advise subdividing the parcel prior to the comp plan amendment and rezone request.

Public Hearing

The public comment period was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 4, 2024, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

Damon Davis expressed his interest in increasing housing stock in the area. He noted that attainable housing would allow employees for local businesses to move to Grand Junction.

Carlene Goldthwaite provided some statistics on housing affordability. She spoke about the "Yes in God's Backyard (YIGBY)" movement nationwide.

Todd Ousley, President of the Four Pines Subdivision HOA, expressed concerns about the density of the development being based on the larger acreage. He commented on the inadequacy of F ½ Rd to accommodate the increase in traffic created by this development. He asked about height restrictions in the RL-5 vs. RM-8 zone districts. He stated that the church's ability to pay their mortgage should not be a factor in the consideration of the rezone request.

Jamie Edwards with HRWC noted that their organization had no intention of "overdeveloping" the parcel or sneak anything past the neighbors.

Curtis Johnston advocated to keep the current landuse designation and develop the parcel at an RL-5 zoning instead.

Carol Bergman asked if the parcel would be rezoned to RM-12 in the future. She shared other's concerns about using the larger acreage for calculating density and stated the parcel should be split before rezone.

Hector Bran stated his concerns about traffic and parking problems created from the rezone and the impact the increased density would have on surrounding property values.

John Gordon stated his concerns about traffic and parking problems created from the rezone.

Leslie Gordon expressed her concerns about the church being demolished and the RM-8 zoning allowing future developers to create apartment buildings on the parcel.

Jen Foster spoke about the landuse designations outlined in the current Comp Plan and that this rezone would not have a meaningful impact on housing availability or affordability.

Laura Ousley agreed that the parcel should be subdivided prior to development. She expressed concerns about the height restrictions for structures in the RM-8 zone district.

Valerie Carson, Reverend of the church, asked if there was a way for the Commission to add a contingency to the rezone request that the property be subdivided prior to development. She clarified that HRWC needed to be able to build 24 units in order to receive approval from their board, so anything less than RM-8 would not meet the minimum requirements. She brought up that F ½ Rd was already slated for improvement regardless of how this parcel developed.

Becky Delk shared concerns about the increased traffic and parking. She stated that the new development could block her view of the Grand Mesa.

Thomas Kierstead stated that there was no perfect solution for if the parcel should be subdivided prior to rezone or vice versa.

Katie Kierstead noted that the City had minimum off-street parking requirements for new developments.

Valerie Carson, David Miller, and Aaron Young responded to public comments.

Conversation ensued about how the parcel could develop at the 24-unit density.

The public comment period was closed at 8:16 p.m. on June 11, 2024.

Discussion

Commissioner Ehlers commented on the City's development requirements for simple and major subdivisions. He clarified the max heights for various zone districts. He expressed that he did not feel the comp plan amendment was necessary to create the desired density on the parcel.

Commissioner Herek stated her concerns with rezoning the parcel prior to subdividing. She expressed that she didn't think rezoning the whole parcel to RM-8 was appropriate.

Commissioner Secrest spoke about the potential for the project to change during the development and that despite ALC and HRWC's intentions, the property may end up getting sold to a different developer looking to maximize density.

Commissioner Moore stated the importance of upholding the Comprehensive Plan rather than amending it in the name of increased density. He speculated on whether it was appropriate to rezone the whole parcel to RM-8 regardless of future development and whether it fit the visions and goals of the overall community.

Commissioner Weckerly spoke on the importance of upholding the Comprehensive Plan. She noted that an amendment to Residential Medium could allow future rezones to MU-1 which is not the intent of the current request. She commented on the projects around town that had stalled out halfway through development and that she didn't want to see that for this project.

Commissioner Scissors commented on the novelty of the seller/buyer for a development not being profit motivated. He said he was not as concerned about the Comp Plan amendment or the ramifications it had for the future development of the parcel.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Ehlers made the following motion "Mr. Chairman, on the Comprehensive Plan Amendment request for the property located at 631 26 ½ Road, City file number CPA-2024-143, 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 failed 5-1.

Commissioner Ehlers made the following motion "Mr. Chairman, on the Rezone request for the property located at 631 26 ½ Road, City file number RZN-2024-144, 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 and with the condition that City Council approves the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map Amendment to Residential Medium."

Commissioner Herek seconded; motion failed 5-1.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Ehlers moved to adjourn the meeting.

The vote to adjourn was 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.