



City of Colorado Springs

City Hall
107 N. Nevada Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO
80903

Meeting Minutes - Draft Planning Commission

Thursday, August 15, 2019

8:30 AM

Council Chambers

6.A. [CPC PUZ
19-00061](#)

An ordinance amending the zoning map of the City of Colorado Springs relating to 15.67 acres located on the southwest corner of Woodmen Road and Austin Bluffs Parkway from OC/PBC/AO/SS (Office Complex and Planned Business Center with Airport and Streamside Overlay) to PUD/AO/SS (Planned Unit Development: Single-Family Residential, maximum density of 3.6 dwelling units per acre, 35-foot maximum building height with Airport and Streamside Overlay)

(QUASI-JUDICIAL)

Related Files: CPC PUZ 19-00061, CPC CP 08-00142-A7MN19, CPC PUD 19-00063

Presenter:

Tasha Brackin, Senior Planner, Planning & Community Development
Peter Wysocki, Planning & Community Development Director

Staff presentation:

Tasha Brackin, Senior Planner with the City, presented a PowerPoint with the scope and intent of the project.

The project included 3 applications:

- A zone change for 15.7 from Office Complex and Planned Business Center to Planned Unit Development
- A concept plan amendment changing the land use designation from commercial and medical office to single-family residential
- A development plan proposing 56 single-family lots

Applicant Presentation:

John Maynard, N.E.S. Inc., presented a PowerPoint with the scope and intent of the project.

Questions:

Commissioner Raughton asked for clarification of the street and will it be a private drive. Mr. Maynard said that was correct. It will be a private owned drive maintained by the homeowner's association.

Commissioner Wilson asked if since traffic and access was a concern, had they thought of connecting to Lee Vance Drive. Mr. Maynard explained that it was not physically possible to do that. It would not be feasible to do this project without a considerable amount of fill and retaining walls along Cottonwood Creek, which would preclude access from this development to the creek in order to make that access connection. That is why the applicant pursued the three quarter movement.

Commissioner Eubanks commented that Ms. Brackin stated the school district did not have an issue with the development; however, the packet included in email where the school district stated they think there will be a direct impact on the district and was requesting fees in lieu of land dedication based on current city code. Mr. Maynard answered that the school district's standard response for the conversion of non-residential land because they prefer the development be non-residential because of the tax base. Mr. Maynard said he had spoken to District 20, Don Smith, who said that would be the stand comment to alert elected and appointed officials that there is a concern when there is an unplanned number of new students. Mr. Maynard said he was told their bottom line is they want fees rather than land.

Supporters:

None

Opponents:

Andrea Johnson, representing Newport Heights area, which is south of the development

Two main concerns:

- Traffic -
 - added vehicles to exit from Woodmen to Austin Bluffs will cause reduced speeds to access the site
 - Concerns with people flipping U-turns since there is no way west from this area
 - Huge impact on Austin Bluffs with an additional 100 cars
- Wildlife
 - Cottonwood Creek is a corridor for all the wildlife and will make an impact on wildlife
 - Problems with drainage and with more houses on the slant it will make it worse

Elizabeth Vanatta, Homeowner just north of Woodmen

- Questioned if the development would be detrimental to public interest, health, safety, convenience, and general welfare
 - Asked the Planning Commission not to accept hearsay from the

applicant regarding the school district's concern and that they simply want fees

- Traffic concerns and that traffic study is outdated and does not include the new development of Midtown Collections
- Wildlife will be impacted due to the dense building
- PlanCOS calls for reasonable densification and not explosive densification

Rebuttal:

Mike Rocha, SM Rocha, LLC., traffic and transportation consultants

- As it relates to speed on Woodmen eastbound traffic coming down the hill, cars stopping needing to make turns into the site and U-turns
 - Mr. Rocha acknowledged the traffic on Woodmen and traveling downhill past Lee Vance
 - Mr. Rocha said they worked very closely with City Traffic engineers and looked at alternatives but the Lee Vance access was not feasible due to the grade differentials
 - Mr. Rocha believed the three quarter movement allowing for people traveling westbound to turn left into the site is a better situation than forcing U-turn movement
 - There are plans to add deceleration lanes that pull traffic from the main stream of traffic on Woodmen
 - There is an existing deceleration lane for the eastbound right turn that turns into the site
 - Proposing a deceleration lane within the median on Woodman for westbound left
 - With every development, there is an impact to traffic volume
 - The traffic study that was presented to the City was from November 2018 and while the study does not specifically state all developments by name, the study includes traffic generation from adjacent development as well. Both existing and future traffic is measured

Commissioner Almy stated he was concerned about rush hour traffic and the unique nature of our roads aligning with the solar disk. Around daylight savings time, the solar disk is in your windshield and we are asking traffic to do these risky maneuvers. Commissioner Almy said it appeared the analysis was based on averages and believed that worst case scenarios would be more viable. Commissioner Almy said he is curious what the accident statistics are during rush hour when the sun is hitting their windshields.

Mr. Rocha said they did not do an accident analysis at Austin Bluffs and Woodmen but felt it was a valid concern. The sight distance both vertically and

horizontally is exceeded through the standard design practices. For the sunlight in the morning, there really isn't a way to truly account for that effect. In terms of analysis, the study does look at the worst case scenario, which is peak hours. The peak hours are based off the estimate of the daily traffic for the site.

Commissioner Almy said an equal split of East/West is not worst case, but worst case would be everybody goes in the worst direction, so you almost have to assume that something is not an average.

Mr. Rocha said the distribution for the site was based on location and not some natural operations of residential neighborhoods. Mr. Rocha said the study is used with everything that is needed to support residential which includes work traffic in the morning, in the evening, and going to visit retail.

Commissioner McMurray said he disliked the fact that Lee Vance was not going to be used. Commissioner McMurray asked for a better sense of what the technical constraints were.

Mr. Rocha said when the application was first started, we had firm direction from City Traffic to go to Lee Vance. That was evaluated based on the current site application in play for the storage units. In order to get the roadway grade that would meet city design standards would require significant fill for that site. The City Traffic was provided detail and justification to show that it just was not feasible to make that connection to Lee Vance.

Commissioner Raughton asked if there was a plan for an acceleration lane onto Woodmen. Mr. Rocha said there is not one proposed at this time and believe that signalization of Woodman and Lee Vance will provide some gaps in traffic that will allow drivers a little bit more time to enter.

Mr. Rocha pointed out there are existing three quarter movement with left turns crossing the three lanes of traffic on Woodmen further west of the site.

Commissioner Hente asked for clarification that even though the traffic study did not specifically name Midtown Collections, that it was included in the projected traffic. Mr. Rocha said that was correct.

Commissioner Rickett asked if there was an increase in accidents at the other three quarter turns that were mentioned. Mr. Rocha said they did not do an accident analysis of those intersections.

John Maynard, N.E.S., said he visited the site mid-morning on a weekday and observed the traffic light at Lee Vance created gaps in traffic. Mr. Maynard made note that the site is 15 acres and nine of those acres are dedicated open

space. Approximately five of those acres will be included in what is the Cottonwood Creek drainage corridor and left undisturbed, so there is a significant contribution to preservation of the wildlife corridor by this project.

Questions of Staff:

Commissioner McMurray asked for someone from City Traffic to comment on the City's process where Lee Vance is concerned.

Todd Frisbee, Division Manager for Traffic Engineering

Mr. Frisbee said the City asked the applicant to look at access to Lee Vance. Mr. Frisbee said Mr. Rocha came back to them with the study and from the geography point of view, the applicant couldn't make it work, so other options were explored. Commissioner McMurray asked about Lot G and if that was considered, and Mr. Frisbee said that he did not believe the applicants were the owners of that lot.

Commissioner Raughton said he has concerns about the standards the City uses with alley access to residential developments. Commissioner Raughton suggested that traffic engineers and planning review the standards because there are so many companies within a development that he thinks are complicated by those very narrow right-of-ways. This development addresses this by having the homeowners' association maintain it. Commissioner Raughton wanted to know if the parking standards for these alley accesses have been analyzed for residential developments.

Mr. Frisbee said they have not specifically looked at that, and they have less traffic and is less of a concern.

Commissioner Raughton said he was more concerned with them being dedicated to the city for future maintenance. Mr. Frisbee said this was more of a planning question and that City Traffic would provide input, but these are evaluated on a case by case basis.

Commissioner Raughton asked Mr. Frisbee if he had a similar experience to acceleration lanes as described by Mr. Rocha that they are of marginal value.

Mr. Frisbee said he is always a little wary of acceleration lanes in an urban setting and that they work better on limited access road like Powers Boulevard where you don't have a lot of other access points. This would be a major arterial roadway and our standards don't require an acceleration lane. Sometimes the acceleration can be more of a safety hazard than a benefit.

Commissioner Raughton asked about triangular intersections and if this was considered. Mr. Frisbee said that was not considered primarily because the

criteria did not require that.

Commissioner Almy asked why we are adding input directly and not at a light onto Woodmen when Woodmen has become a reasonable corridor for east/west traffic.

Mr. Frisbee said City Traffic has not received any complaints or concerns from the public or the police department with the other three quarter access points along Woodmen. So, with not a lot of homes, 55, and not a lot of traffic will be generated so the three quarter access is a safe, reasonable access to serve this development. Mr. Frisbee said Woodmen is a good east/west corridor and they want to preserve it, but also we have to recognize we are in an urban area. It is a matter of finding that balance between providing reasonable access and maintaining the flow.

Commissioner Rickett asked Mr. Frisbee if he agreed with the opinion that this site would reduce the traffic out of that area going from commercial to residential.

Mr. Frisbee responded that he reviewed the study and agreed with Mr. Rocha's evaluation of the site development and that residential is always much lower in traffic generation.

Commissioner Rickett asked if there would have been another option if it was a commercial site versus residential. Mr. Frisbee said he could not speculate as a commercial developer might have obtained additional property and pursued different access options. Mr. Frisbee said they had to go on what the area was being zoned for.

Commissioner Almy commented there was a lot of medical use on that card or in that area with very little medical centers that would have been a good use for this site as a commercial property. Commissioner Almy asked if there was sufficient commercial property for medical support centers.

Meggan Herington, Assistant Director of Planning & Community Development Ms. Herington explained city code does not currently require the planning department to do a formal and official physical impact analysis with a zone change. From the perspective of the needs of the corridor and supporting the commercial and office use for the hospital, we rely on the applicants letting us know trends as well as the trends we know through our comprehensive look at land uses and where the city sits as far as the ratio of land uses. Ms. Herington added there is a good amount of commercial and office zoned property in this area that is available. At this point, there is no involvement with the budget department or a requirement for a Financial Impact Analysis with a zone

change.

Commissioner Almy asked if the additional runoff was considered with changing soft scape, trees, and grass for the hardscape, which is building roads, etc...

Ms. Herington responded that is all considered as part of the drainage reports that is submitted with the development plan. With the final plat, that all has to be taken into consideration, water quality and detention and the impacts of that.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF PLANNING COMMISSION:

Commissioner Raughton said like all infill development this is complex. Commissioner Raughton said he believed this project is reducing the intensity of the potential development on this triangular site in that it is a limited number of residential units. Commissioner Raughton also expressed he liked the fact this private drive is a private responsibility and not the obligation of the city in the long term, and with that they have restricted both the parking, off street parking and all that in the homeowners' association.

Commissioner McMurray was in favor of the zone change and concept plan but was not in favor of the development plan. Commissioner McMurray was not convinced the connection using Lee Vance was not fought for enough.

Commissioner Wilson said she was more inclined to keep the zoning as it already is and would not be in supporting the application.

Commissioner McMurray added that the sole criteria on the concept plan he could not justify was 7.5.501.E.4

Commissioner Almy, although in support, had reservations about the traffic flow pattern, however, it met the review criteria.

Commissioner Eubanks said her biggest issue was the traffic but after hearing from the traffic manager, she believed all options were considered, and this use would cut down traffic more than a commercial use. Commissioner Eubanks said ideally, people do not want their open space developed, but considering this is a residential area, this would be a good use for this space.

Motion by Raughton, seconded by Eubanks, to recommend approval to City Council the zone change of 15.67 acres from OC/PBC/AO/SS (Office complex and Planned Business Center with Airport Overlay and Streamside Overlay) to PUD/AO/SS (Planned Unit Development with Airport Overlay and Streamside Overlay), based upon the findings that the change of zone request complies with the review criteria for establishment of a PUD zone as set forth in City Code Section 7.3.603 and the zone change criteria as set forth in Section 7.5.603.B with one technical modification:

- 1. correct graphic notations for consistency with the legal description.**

The motion passed by a vote of 6:1:2:0

Aye: 6 - Vice Chair Hente, Commissioner Raughton, Commissioner McMurray, Commissioner Eubanks, Commissioner Almy and Commissioner Rickett

No: 1 - Commissioner Wilson

Absent: 2 - Chair Graham and Commissioner McDonald

- 6.B. [CPC CP 08-00142-A7 MN19](#) A minor concept plan amendment changing the land use designation of 15.67 acres from commercial and medical office to single-family residential, located at the southwest corner of Woodmen Road and Austin Bluffs Parkway.

(QUASI-JUDICIAL)

Related Files: CPC PUZ 19-00061, CPC CP 08-00142-A7MN19, CPC PUD 19-00063

Presenter:

Tasha Brackin, Senior Planner, Planning & Community Development
 Peter Wysocki, Planning & Community Development Director

See Item 6.A. (CPC PUZ 19-00061)

Motion by Eubanks, seconded by Raughton, to recommend approval to City Council the minor concept plan amendment, based upon the findings that the amended Concept Plan complies with the review criteria as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.501(E).

The motion passed by a vote of 6-1-2-0

Aye: 6 - Vice Chair Hente, Commissioner Raughton, Commissioner McMurray, Commissioner Eubanks, Commissioner Almy and Commissioner Rickett

No: 1 - Commissioner Wilson

Absent: 2 - Chair Graham and Commissioner McDonald

- 6.C. [CPC PUD 19-00063](#) The Trailside at Cottonwood Creek PUD Development Plan proposing 56 single-family lots on 15.67 acres with a maximum building height of 35-feet, located at the southwest corner of Woodmen Road and Austin Bluffs Parkway.

Related Files: CPC PUZ 19-00061, CPC CP 08-00142-A7MN19, CPC PUD 19-00063

Presenter:

Tasha Brackin, Senior Planner, Planning & Community Development
 Peter Wysocki, Planning & Community Development Director

See Item 6.A. (CPC PUZ 19-00061)

Motion by Eubanks, seconded by Rickett, to recommend approval to City Council the development plan for Trailside at Cottonwood Creek, based upon the findings that the development plan meets the review criteria for PUD development plans as set forth in City Code Section 7.3.606, and the development plan review criteria as set forth in Section 7.5.502E, with the following technical modification:

1. Fill in notes on the cover page relating to the approved Geologic Hazard Report and the project and ordinance numbers.

The motion passed by a vote of 5-2-2-0

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Hente, Commissioner Raughton, Commissioner Eubanks, Commissioner Almy and Commissioner Rickett

No: 2 - Commissioner McMurray and Commissioner Wilson

Absent: 2 - Chair Graham and Commissioner McDonald