

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mike Geisel, City Administrator

FROM: Justin Wyse, Director of Planning *JW*
James Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer *JE*

SUBJECT: Planning & Public Works Committee **Virtual Meeting**
Summary Thursday, December 10, 2020



A meeting of the Planning and Public Works Committee of the Chesterfield City Council was held virtually via Zoom on Thursday, December 10, 2020.

In attendance were: **Chair Dan Hurt**, (Ward III), **Councilmember Mary Monachella** (Ward I), **Councilmember Mary Ann Mastorakos** (Ward II), and **Councilmember Michelle Ohley** (Ward IV).

Also in attendance were: Mayor Bob Nation; Councilmember Michael Moore (Ward III); Planning Commission Chair Merrell Hansen; Jim Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer; Justin Wyse, Director of Planning; Zach Wolff, Assistant City Engineer; Steve Merk, Civil Engineer; and Kathy Juergens, Recording Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

I. APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY

A. Approval of the November 19, 2020 Committee Meeting Summary

Councilmember Ohley made a motion to approve the Meeting Summary of November 19, 2020. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mastorakos and **passed** by a voice vote of 4-0.

II. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Replacement Construction and Maintenance Escrows for Fienup Farms Subdivision. (Ward 4)

STAFF PRESENTATION

Justin Wyse, Director of Planning, stated that about a year and a half ago, the City approved 11 plats for the Fienup Farms subdivision. With each plat there is a construction agreement and letter of credit and also a maintenance agreement and letter of credit. The developer and the respective homebuilders are now seeking to replace the current guarantees with new agreements and letters of credit. In accordance with the Unified Development Code, replacement construction and maintenance escrows and agreements are being presented to the Committee for review and recommendation prior to proceeding to City Council. Staff has reviewed the request and has no concerns with the replacement.

Councilmember Ohley made a motion to forward the Replacement Construction and Maintenance Escrows for the Fienup Farms Subdivision to City Council with a recommendation to approve. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Monachella and passed by a voice vote of 4-0.

[Please see the attached report prepared by Justin Wyse, Director of Planning, for additional information on the Replacement Construction and Maintenance Escrows for the Fienup Farms Subdivision.]

- B. P.Z. 08-2020 Straub Lane Estates (14685 Clayton Road):** A request for a change in zoning from 'NU' Non-Urban District to 'R-3' Residence District for an undeveloped 0.90-acre tract of land on the north side of Clayton Road, west of Straub Lane. (21R441513). (Ward 3)

STAFF PRESENTATION

Justin Wyse, Director of Planning, presented the request for a change in zoning from an "NU" Non-Urban District to an "R-3" Residence District for a 0.90-acre tract of land located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Clayton Road and Straub Lane.

A Public Hearing was held at the November 23, 2020 Planning Commission meeting. At that time, there was considerable discussion regarding the development opportunities for the site, access to the site, and how it will integrate overall with the existing development pattern particularly with the parcel to the north. After discussion, the Planning Commission motioned to amend the proposed zoning district to "R-2" which passed by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Wyse added that during the Public Hearing, the resident immediately north of the subject site expressed concern about water issues and explained that even with a small rainfall, their subdivision street is filled with water running down from the subject site. Mr. Wyse explained the City's development process and stated that Staff will review the details of the development and stormwater mitigation efforts throughout the review process. Staff has also continued to correspond with the property owner and MSD and Staff is reviewing the existing conditions on the site as well.

DISCUSSION

In response to Chair Hurt's comments, Mr. Wyse stated that the site is intended for residential development. The property to the west was approved for commercial use through a Residential Business Use procedure. If the applicant was interested in doing something similar, an additional zoning process would be necessary requiring another public hearing and ordinance approval.

Planning Commission Report

Planning Commission Chair Merrell Hansen stated that the Planning Commission extensively discussed the lot size, lot shape, access to the site, and the amount of buffering between the lots. They also discussed the impact of the stormwater issues and how that may be alleviated with landscaping. After discussion with the Applicant and the resident, the Planning Commission and the Applicant agreed that an "R-2" designation was suitable.

Councilmember Mastorakos concurred with the Planning Commission's analysis but expressed concern about the rear vegetation that backs up to the White Gate Farm subdivision. Mr. Wyse stated that maintaining the existing vegetation in that area would help to comply with the City's tree preservation requirements. That issue would be reviewed later in the development process. In addition to the tree preservation requirements, the Applicant would have to comply with the

City's landscape requirements and buffering requirements. At a minimum, they would have to maintain 30% of the existing canopy on the site; however, this is dependent on where the utilities will be placed to serve the lots. Staff has had several conversations with the Applicant's engineer and he is aware of the concern. It was noted that some conceptual ideas on what can be done during site plan review have been explored, and that Staff will work out the final engineering details. Staff has kept in contact with the neighboring property owner and MSD, and it is hoped that a mutual agreement can be reached for everyone.

In response to Councilmember Moore's question, Ms. Hansen replied that the Applicant originally requested 3 lots, however, the Planning Commission was more comfortable with 2 lots for the site. By approving the "R-2" zoning district rather than the requested "R-3" district, the property will be permitted to construct no more than 2 single-family dwellings.

Chair Hurt commented that typically the City addresses water runoff with a detention pond in which the outflow is reduced 25%. The same amount of water will flow, but the rate at which it flows is slowed down, benefitting property owners downstream. By law, the City cannot change the amount of water flow; only the rate of flow can be changed to prevent any destructive effects downstream.

Chair Hurt made a motion to accept the Planning Commission's recommendation to change the zoning district of P.Z. 08-2020 Straub Lane Estates (14685 Clayton Road) from "R-3" to "R-2" and forward P.Z. 08-2020 to City Council with a recommendation to approve. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mastorakos and passed by a voice vote of 4-0.

Note: One Bill, as recommended by the Planning Commission, will be needed for the January 4, 2021 City Council Meeting. See Bill #

[Please see the attached report prepared by Justin Wyse, Director of Planning, for additional information on P.Z. 08-2020 Straub Lane Estates (14685 Clayton Road).]

C. Wilson Avenue Update

STAFF PRESENTATION

Jim Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer, stated that at the October 8 Planning & Public Works Committee meeting, a detailed PowerPoint was presented delineating the current condition of Wilson Avenue, and after considerable discussion, the Committee directed Staff to prepare a grant application.

The first step in preparing the grant application was to obtain public input for the design details. This was accomplished via an online survey on the City's website, publicized by a direct email to the subdivision trustees, the website, and a readable message board along Wilson Avenue. Residents were asked questions pertaining to the desired character of the road, shoulder width and composition, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and a potential connection to Baxter Crossing Lane. Five hundred forty (540) surveys were received with the following results.

- 75% of respondents preferred a rural section (asphalt road with no curb and gutter)
- 70% of respondents preferred a paved shoulder
- 79% of respondents preferred an off-road shared use path for bicycles and pedestrians
- 65% of respondents were opposed to a vehicular connection from Wilson Avenue to Baxter Lane Crossing, while 64% favored a bicycle/pedestrian connection

The survey also included a Comments section. There were 15 pages of comments from residents, many of whom opposed the project in its entirety. Of note, the residents who entered comments opposed this project nearly two to one. Most of the objections were related to a belief that the project would result in increased traffic volumes, increased speed, and a change in the road's rural characteristic and charm.

Mr. Eckrich pointed out that there were some negative comments regarding the lack of public input. He explained that Staff would have held a public meeting to specifically discuss the project, however, due to COVID, such a meeting was not possible which was the reason for the online survey. There will definitely be substantial public input both before and after the design process is completed, if the grant application is successful.

The survey intentionally did not ask whether residents support improvements to Wilson Avenue because such a question is extremely vague and difficult to answer. Obviously, there are residents who support improvements, and others who do not. Specific questions were only asked that could be used as part of the grant application.

Staff Recommendations

Staff recommends pursuing the TIP grant for improvements. However, if Council disagrees, Staff will stop the grant process. If the Council would like Staff to proceed with the grant application, then the following questions need to be answered:

1. Should the grant application include a connection (vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian) from Wilson Avenue to Baxter Crossing Lane?
Staff Recommendation: Include the bicycle, pedestrian and vehicular connection. Include a vehicular connection but specify that it will be funded by non-participating funds. This will give the City the flexibility to remove the vehicular connection at a later date without forfeiting the grant. The vehicular connection can then be addressed later as part of public input related to the project.
2. Should bicycle and pedestrian accommodations be included as part of the project?
Staff Recommendation: These accommodations should be included.
3. Should the City pursue a traffic signal and turn lanes at the intersection of Wild Horse Creek Road and Wilson Avenue?
Staff Recommendation: Enhancements to the intersection should be included. However, the application should include language to the effect that traffic signals and lane additions would ultimately need to be approved and accepted by St. Louis County as they maintain Wild Horse Creek Road.
4. Should the City include the hill south of the current project limits in the grant application?
Staff Recommendation: This should not be included due to the additional cost and the possibility of the grant not being approved.

DISCUSSION

Councilmember Ohley made a motion to direct Staff to continue to pursue a TIP Grant for Wilson Avenue road improvements. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Monachella.

In response to Councilmember Mastorakos' question, Mr. Eckrich responded that grant applications must be specific enough to obtain benefit points. However, if the application is overly specific, and it is decided later to exclude something, it can be difficult to remove items. As when considering the intersection at Wild Horse Creek Road if we state that we will be installing a traffic signal or specific turn lanes those will have to be constructed. Instead, we will likely word the grant in such a way that these enhancements will be considered and constructed based upon the engineering design and warrants determined during design.

The above motion was passed by a voice vote of 4-0.

After extensive discussion on the items to include in the grant application, as mentioned above, the following motions were made:

Councilmember Ohley made a motion to include, depending upon results of an engineering study, enhancements to the intersection of Wild Horse Creek Road and Wilson Avenue, which may include a traffic signal and/or turn lanes, in the Wilson Avenue Improvement TIP grant application. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Monachella and **passed by a voice vote of 4-0.**

Councilmember Ohley made a motion to include bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in the Wilson Avenue Improvement TIP grant application. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Monachella and **passed by a voice vote of 4-0.**

Councilmember Ohley made a motion to exclude reconstruction of the hill south of the current project limits in the Wilson Avenue Improvement TIP grant application. The motion was seconded by Chair Hurt and **passed by a voice vote of 4-0.**

Bicycle, Pedestrian and Vehicular Connection to Baxter Crossing Lane

Mr. Eckrich discussed the traffic study completed by George Butler (GBA) and highlighted the 2020 and 2040 model scenarios with and without the Baxter Crossing Lane connection. The model shows that traffic would be reduced if a connection is made between Wilson Avenue and Baxter Crossing Lane. This same result was obtained in 1990 when a similar traffic model was completed.

Councilmember Ohley stated that opening up this road will be beneficial to all residents and it will make Wilson Avenue safer while decreasing traffic for upper Wilson Avenue. She hopes that the traffic study will be made available to the residents who are in opposition to the connection. Those in opposition need to see the study and have their questions answered in order to help them understand how this will benefit them.

Councilmember Mastorakos stated that after asking for resident input, the City has the responsibility to listen to the residents. She is supportive of the bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, but as long as there is opposition from the residents regarding the vehicular connection, regardless of what the traffic study indicates, she feels it is important that Council members listen to the residents as City Council represents the residents.

Councilmember Ohley stated that her support of the connection is related to safety. In response to her question regarding the timing of the survey and the traffic study, Mr. Eckrich stated that the survey was published before the traffic study was complete. Councilmember Ohley then commented that the residents were not even aware that a study was being conducted. If they had seen the study and realized how the connection will benefit them, they may have been in

favor of the connection. She asked that Staff make sure that the results are published. If the residents are still in opposition after seeing the traffic study, then she may reconsider her position. She stated that there needs to be more interaction between the City and the residents to help them understand the impacts a connection may have on traffic and how that connection may benefit motorists and area residents.

Councilmember Monachella asked for clarification of the survey results. Mr. Eckrich stated that of the people who answered, 64% supported the bike and pedestrian connection, while 65% opposed the vehicular connection. Mr. Eckrich stated that these were two separate questions on the survey. In order to address this, and to obtain the necessary grant points, Mr. Eckrich recommended that the vehicular connection be included in the application with the stipulation that it will be funded with non-participating grand funds. Therefore, if the percentages do not change after public education, the connection can still be removed from the grant and it will not adversely affect the City's chance of receiving the grant. Staff will provide further information to the residents to help them understand that the connection will actually reduce traffic. If residents are still in opposition, there is always the option to eliminate the connection and not jeopardize the rest of the project.

Councilmember Mastorakos inquired as to why the connection needs to be included in the grant application. Mr. Eckrich explained that if it is included in the grant (with non-participating funds), the City will still gain benefit points that are needed to obtain the overall grant approval. If it is excluded, it will lessen the City's chances of getting the grant.

Councilmember Ohley made a motion to include a vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian connection from Wilson Avenue to Baxter Crossing Lane in the Wilson Avenue Improvement TIP grant application. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Monachella.

Discussion after the Motion

Mayor Nation stated that while Council wants to listen to the residents, it also has a responsibility to review the data available and take the advice of its professional staff. At times, the residents may have a good idea, but if supporting data contradicts that idea, then the City has to exercise its judgement and rely on the City's expert's advice. Council has a greater responsibility to provide the residents with safe conditions within the City than to just complying with resident wishes.

Comments from Speakers

Tim Schoen, 1215 Walnut Hill Farm Drive; Jane Staniforth, 19 Wheatley Court; and Paul Blase, 1204 Walnut Hill Farm, all spoke in favor of pursuing the TIP grant citing safety concerns for pedestrians, bringing the road up to current standards, and providing emergency vehicle access. It was also noted that Wilson Avenue is not a private road just for resident use, it is a public road for all to use.

The above motion passed by a voice vote of 4-0.

IV. OTHER – None.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.