



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota

Blaine City Hall
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Blaine MN 55449

Legislation Text

File #: WS 22-078, Version: 1

Workshop Item - *Sheila Sellman, City Planner*

Title

Residential Development Concept for 80 Acres East of The Lakes Development Along Future Lakes Parkway Extension

Background

Thompkins Development LLC has been attempting to assemble properties involving 225 acres at the Southwest corner of 125th Avenue and Lexington Avenue to create a master planned community. Some of the property owners are not ready to sell but they currently have 80 acres under contract. The overall 80 acres includes four different parcels collectively owned by the Kempf family. A single-family home exists on one of the parcels and the other three are currently vacant. A site location map is included in the attachments providing locational context. The properties have been listed for sale by Gaughan Companies.

The property is currently guided LDR (Low Density Residential) in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and zoned FR (Farm Residential). Per the new subdivision concept review policy, a concept review is required by the City Council prior to any applications being submitted.

Concept

At this time, the developer is seeking feedback on two single-family development types for these 80 acres. Thompkins Development LLC is partnering with Watermark Companies and Tradition Development. Watermark Companies is a real estate development company that develops single-family communities designated specifically for rental. Information is included about previous projects Watermark Companies has completed in Maple Grove, Inver Grove Heights, and Woodbury. The rental product is intended to be high-end with rents up to \$4,500 as demonstrated in other communities where this product has been built. It should be noted that the City does not have control whether a housing product can be owner occupied or rental, however the City does have control of zoning requirements related to lot size, etc., through the DF (Development Flex) zoning.

Tradition Development will be the lead developer of the site and have been the builder for Watermark's homes. Tradition Development also builds homes under the entity of RT Residential (Robert Thomas Homes) and will be building on the proposed 43 single-family lots on the south end of the site that will be for sale.

The site has existing wetlands and about 42.9 acres of developable area. The concept plan shows the northern part of the site developed with 133 small single-family lots for the rental product by Watermark. The streets as shown are private with access from Lakes Parkway extension which would be public and a stub street to the east. The proposed lot width is 30 feet. This is very narrow, and as shown the lot can accommodate a 22-foot-wide house that is 60-feet deep with 4-foot side and rear setbacks and 15-feet in the front. Lots this narrow have never been approved in Blaine.

Additionally, the minimum house width identified in the zoning ordinance is 24 feet wide. DF zoning allows for modifications and flexibility to the zoning ordinance, however modifications to the plan may need to occur if there is interest by the City Council in this product type.

The concept shows the southern portion developed with 43 single-family lots that are 50-feet in width which can accommodate a house that is 40-feet wide and 60-feet deep with 5-foot side and rear yard setbacks and 20-foot front yard. These lots would have access via a public road off Lakes Parkway extension and two private roads, one of which is proposed off Lakes Parkway.

The overall net density for both projects is 4.1 units an acre which meets the required densities of the LDR land use category.

Lakes Parkway Extension

At the January 10, 2022, workshop, the City Council discussed various road connections that may be funded entirely or partially by the City either concurrently or ahead of development. The City Council was generally supportive of looking at construction of Lakes Parkway to help spur development and provide additional roadway connections within the City. The same consensus was made at the July 18, 2022, workshop when a commercial concept was introduced for the southwest corner of 125th Avenue and Lexington Avenue.

Typically, public roads are constructed by the developer, however in this situation there are unique considerations given the length of roadway to be constructed that is not directly part of the proposed development. The developer has asked if the City would participate financially in the construction of the extension of Lakes Parkway from the existing Lakes Parkway to Lexington Avenue. A Zest Street connection was discussed with a commercial concept at the July 18 workshop.

The developer's engineer is in the process of estimating the costs of utility and street extensions of Lakes Parkway from the existing Lakes Parkway stub east to connect with Lexington Avenue and Zest Street from Lakes Parkway to 125th Avenue. A future discussion on cost sharing will be brought back to council at a future workshop for consideration.

At that future workshop staff will review funding options available for each of these extensions. These roadways are identified as State Aid corridors and would be eligible for State Aid funds to construct the street portion, but they would compete for funds with the City's other State Aid system street projects.

The utility portion of these projects would either be funded with the City's existing utility enterprise funds or assessed to the benefitting properties. As utility projects, there is the potential that they be paid for with the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Council discuss the concept plan and provide direction on the small lots and overall development.

A master plan concept for this area is included in the packet to help facilitate the conversation. At the July 18, 2022 workshop, council reviewed the commercial portion of the concept. At this time the developer only has control over the "Kemp" 80 acres and has a different partnership for the 40 acres at the southwest corner of 125th Avenue and Lexington.

Attachment List

Site Location Map
Letter from the Developer
Residential Concept Plan
Master Plan Concept
Watermark Information
Elevations
House Plans
News Article