

July 15, 2014 Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes

Public Hearing – Consider a request to amend the development regulations of Planned Development No. 74 and adopt a Concept Plan and Building Elevations relating to the property. The property is 39.9± acres out of the Thomas G. Kennedy Survey, Abstract No. 500, City of Allen, Collin County, Texas; generally located southwest of Bethany Drive and Montgomery Boulevard. (Z-11/19/13-83) [Montgomery Ridge]

Mr. Ogden “Bo” Bass, Director of Community Development, presented to the Commission. He stated this is a public hearing to consider amending Planned Development No. 74 with development regulations, building elevations, and a concept plan.

The property is generally located southwest of Highway 75 and Bethany Drive. Mr. Bass mentioned the gentle topography of the land, and stated that Allen is a great place to live because of the schools, parks, and retail, but what matters is where you live. Two basic subdivisions in Allen include 65’ lots (R-5), and 55’ lots. However, with time, through approval of the Planning and Zoning Commission and Council, the direction has changed from the typical 65’ and 55’ to including lots as small as 32’. Projects like Hamilton Hills, Village at Twin Creeks, and Cottonwood Crossing have changed the direction of Allen and are more of a representative of the current market – with greater pedestrian feel and a more organic feel and variety. The glass ceiling has been broken on small lots and cross-sections. This project provides a mixture of organic development of multiple types of lots in the same area. PD-74 is mainly zoned office and a portion zoned R-5 for single-family. Single-family is depicted in the future land use plan as well. It has always been understood that a portion of the project will be residential.

Surrounding properties include Planned Development PD No. 105 for R-5 Residential to the north. The property to the east is zoned Planned Development PD No. 105 Single Family Residential R-5 and Planned Development PD No. 74 Office O. The property to the south is zoned Planned Development PD No. 105 Agriculture Open Space AO and Planned Development PD No. 74 Office O. The property to the west is zoned Planned Development PD No. 105 Agriculture Open Space AO.

Mr. Bass stated that approximately 39-acres (Phase 1) are specifically being considered for zoning. Overall, the ownership is about 119 acres. The 39-acres as well as the future phases are shown on the plan because the entire area has been considered by the developer and staff. This area will work in terms of access and circulation and land uses, although there is still ongoing discussion on land uses. The more direct focus is on this project, Phase 1, for residential development. The timing of Montgomery Boulevard has been an important issue. Currently, Montgomery Boulevard dead-ends. The Thoroughfare Plan shows an alignment of the boulevard to flow through the applicant’s property and connect to Highway 75. As a part of this project, the Engineering Department required a traffic assessment. Mathematically, the connection is currently not required. However, the Montgomery family sees the benefit for themselves. Trademark and the City of Allen are motivated as well to shorten the time for that extension. A parallel agreement will tie the timing and the design of the boulevard. One of the deal points is that the construction has to start on the road extension in a certain number of days of a building permit issuance in Phase 1.

There is a single point of access for this development; Montgomery Boulevard. This access has been vetted through the Fire and Engineering Departments. The street patterns have been vetted as well. The lot mix is very unique to the development, and include 60’ wide lots, 50’ wide lots, and 40-49’ lots, which all create an organic feel. The lot size adjacency creates variety and flexibility. Some muses (small intimate spaces) are also integrated in the development. These do not count as open space. The project, however, exceeds in the amount of open space required.

There are 169 lots in this phase. The other phase(s) have also been vetted for connection in the future.

Elevations have also been reviewed. Elevations will not be held to the exact graphics, but the materials and architectural styles have to match the general pallet provided. The styles create a high degree of variability.

The street concept plan shows a variety of streets. The cross sections show parking areas and non-parking areas to keep the streets pedestrian in nature and to effectively flow. Mr. Bass touched on the Boulevard cross-section and pointed out the emphasis on street trees. The cross-section shows two traffic lanes, dedicated bike lanes, 8' on-street parking lanes, a 9'6" area for street trees, and 8' sidewalks (which are larger than average). The sidewalk is shared in this development – some is in the right-of-way, and some on private land. The neighborhood cross-section was also presented. Mr. Bass pointed out the lane widths are normally 12' but are 10' in this development. He explained that there is parking only on one side and the street includes two travel lanes – to keep it small scale and still maintain maneuverability. The landscape and sidewalks are the same as the boulevard.

Mr. Bass subsequently went through the development regulations. The property has a base zoning district of R-7. Flexible design standards will be part of the development regulations. These standards allow for staff to modify certain aspects of the development without public hearings and going before the Commission and Council and the entire PD process. It has been very effective in previous projects, such as Hamilton Hills and PD-108. In this case, a finite list of items can be considered, which includes new streets, open space/parkland, streetscape, side yard setbacks, and driveways.

Basic standards include: 10' front yard setback, 3' side yard setback (between lots), 10' side yard setback (on corner lots along public streets), and 10' rear yards. Minimum lot standards are 40' by 80's, and building height is two stories. Garages can be on either the rear or front, but not both. Building materials include masonry, cementitious-fiber clapboard, and Traditional 3 Coat Stucco. Street classifications include boulevard streets, neighborhood streets, mews street, mews alley, and alley. Finally, landscape standards include tree distances, root barriers, an approved list of trees, and so on.

Mr. Bass concluded by stating that staff recommends approval.

2nd Vice-Chair Trahan asked about the minimum set-backs, if it entails the entire development, and if the footprint of the dwelling can be expanded. Mr. Bass stated yes. Mr. Bass stated most of the development is driven by the market; some by the look. However, if the house is pushed too close to the side yard, mechanical equipment cannot be located there and will need to be placed in the back yard.

Commissioner McNutt pointed out the Boulevard Street Cross-Section slide which was shown, and asked if there is a maximum overhang that has been identified in the 10' setback zone section. Mr. Bass stated it will not overhang past the utility easement or the sidewalk.

Chairman Cocking stated that the building height measurement point has been changed, and asked what is the mid-point of the roof. Mr. Bass stated that the height measurement used to be the highest point of the roof (not counting ornamentation). With the measurement being to the midpoint of the roof, there is more leeway regarding ornamentation and varying roof lines.

Chairman Cocking opened the Public Hearing.

Philip Williams, 1204 Old Bethany Road, Allen, Texas, spoke in favor of the plan, and stated that the plan is thoughtful and innovative. Trails can now have connections throughout the area, so the open space becomes an asset. He stated the bar has been raised and that he is impressed with the project.

Scott Polikov, 3100 McKinney, Dallas, Texas, provided a brief presentation on the project. He mentioned the importance of the project due to it being a legacy development for the Montgomery family as well as the adjacency of Montgomery Farm and Watters Creek. The neighborhood was planned in terms of whether the development will be there in 100 or so years. A great neighborhood is also an economic development strategy. This neighborhood will broaden the type of housing available in Allen. Mr. Polikov also stated he sees this as more of a continuation of Watters Creek and Corporate Center. This first phase has a walkable feel. Being next to Watters Creek, and in west Allen, he believes this is the perfect place for connectivity and variety. There are several pocket parks and public spaces in the neighborhood. He reinforced the variety of lot types, houses, and street types in the development. The housing types, public spaces, and street types are connected; with an important hierarchy. The muse spaces, streets, and lots, for example, all create a comfortable feel. More variety is the trend, and this variety is provided with this project. He emphasized that this variety is not only provided through materials, but design and public spaces. People pay for variety and choice, and that will be beneficial for a long-term tax-base. Mr. Polikov mentioned that this is a comprehensive neighborhood not only with regards to the next future phase, but also in terms of its relationship to Montgomery Farms, Connemara Conservation, Corporate Center, and Watters Creek.

Chairman Cocking opened the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Ogrizovich asked about the size of the homes. Mr. Polikov anticipated a range of home sizes within the development.

Commissioner Ogrizovich commended the development.

Commissioner Orr stated this type of development is long overdue for suburban cities and thought it was a great addition to Allen.

1st Vice-Chair Mangrum agreed that this development will be, as Mr. Bass has stated, breaking the glass.

2nd Vice-Chair Trahan also appreciated the project

Commissioner McNutt asked if there were detached garages, and if so, what the percentages are. Mr. Polikov stated there would not be many detached garages. Detached garages add character, but the consumer preference is for attached garages.

Commissioner McNutt also asked about back to back lots, and if there would or would not be fences. Mr. Bass stated it is up to the individual lot owners, but the PD addresses fences along the alleys. Gas meters and rear utilities have to be inset off the alley surface in a notch-out. Mr. Polikov stated those discussions will be deferred to the builders.

Commissioner McNutt stated that no fences create a great space, which Allen does not have yet, similar to a muse concept. She also stated this is an exciting project with an urban push.

Commissioner Platt also liked the project.

Chairman Cocking mentioned that there would be a lot of street crossing/ "J-walking" in the neighborhood streets as parking is only on one side – bordering on safety concerns. He wanted to know about the 10' versus the 11' lanes. Mr. Bass stated the standard lane widths is 12', with a compromise at 11', but that Engineering has accepted the 10'.

Commissioner McNutt stated that having parking on only one side would allow drivers to understand where people would be.

Chairman Cocking believed the lanes were a little on the tight side. Mr. Polikov stated that research shows that additional widening of streets increases speed. This street is designed to have slower speeds because it is narrower. Making the street wider will make it more dangerous because it would increase speeds. He referenced Highland Park and their narrow lanes that create slow speeds.

Chairman Cocking asked if that distance would work for life safety, CWD, school buses, and so on. Mr. Bass stated yes; all of that has been vetted by the Community Services and Fire Departments.

Chairman Cocking believed this would be an enjoyable subdivision due to its eclectic nature and variety, leaving the cookie-cutter mode of a typical suburbia.

Motion: **Upon a motion by 1st Vice-Chair Mangrum and a second by Commissioner Platt the Commission voted 7 IN FAVOR, and 0 OPPOSED to approve the request to amend the development regulations of Planned Development No. 74 and adopt a Concept Plan and Building Elevations for a 39.9± acre property, generally located southwest of Bethany Drive and Montgomery Boulevard for Montgomery Ridge.**

The motion carried.