

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING NOTES

Project: 900 E Stuart - Single-Family Homes and School

Date: December 18, 2014

City Staff: Seth Lorson (Planning)
Lindsay Ex (Environmental Planning)
Stephanie Blochowiak (Environmental Planning)
Martina Wilkinson (Traffic)
Sarah Burnett (Neighborhood Services)
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Presentation Summary

- **City Presentation**
 - Proposal calls for 29 single-family homes on site
 - Current house on site will be used by Riversong Waldorf school
 - Parcel is located in the Low Density Mixed-Use Neighborhood (LMN) zone district
 - Site is 4.43 acres
- **Applicant Presentation**
 - Site will extend Cherokee Drive for main access
 - Houses will be served by alleys
 - Houses will be 2.5 stories with 2-car garages on main level
 - Development respects the 100 foot buffer required from Spring Creek
 - Proposed density of the site is 6.5 dwelling units per acre, which is comparable to surrounding developments

Question: Do you review the applicant's ability to fund the project?

Response (Staff): No.

Question: I have a 4-acre lot next door and I only built one house. Why could I do that?

Response (Staff): I don't know, I would have to take a closer look at it.

Question: What kind of a school will be onsite?

Response (Staff): It will be an elementary with Pre-K.

Question: Visitor parking would be where? Do you assume we just have one child or grandchild?

Response (Applicant): Parallel parking would be provided on the street. There would be 1 spot in front of each home. There would also be garages and driveways for parking.

Question: Could the residents come in through the drop off so there would be two accesses for Stuart?

Response (Applicant): Possibly. When school is in operation there would be a fence and we would control access that way. Is that something you would like to see or not?

Comment: I would like to see enough parking so that getting in and out isn't a problem.

Response (Applicant): We are showing 8 spaces right now but this is a concept at this stage.

Question: I wanted to ask if you have talked to the fire department about access? I live in Spring Meadows and they wanted to come through our property for a development proposal on the land next to us because the engine couldn't get proper access.

Response (Applicant): We have spoken with Poudre Fire Authority briefly and we know that they would need a hammerhead in and out to have proper access on our site. Just to clarify, do you want the access point to go through your site?

Comment: We don't want the access to come through our site. A developer that came in before was going to develop the parcels in between Spring Meadows and your site and they needed room to turn the engine around.

Response (Applicant): That will be a part of the review and they will make sure they address this issue and that we comply but we aren't that far along yet.

Question: Has the property been purchased?

Response (Applicant): It's under option.

Question: Who truly is the applicant?

Response (Applicant): We are in the due diligence period we are trying to figure out if developing makes sense. This is part of the process.

Comment: The land owner is currently the same family that has owned it for decades.

Comment: The county website said Mary Adams owns it.

Question: So are the current owners looking to sell the property? It's my understanding that many heirs have an interest in the property. So are they trying to use this process to justify selling the property?

Response (Applicant): The property is already under contract.

Question: Is the storage shed gone then?

Response (Applicant): Yes.

Question: I live in Spring Meadows and our HOA president is concerned. I have a letter from her with her list of concerns. Her first concern is what happens when Spring Creek floods? The area behind the creek turns into a lake when it floods. When this parcel is developed, there will be no more pasture to absorb the runoff. What will happen to the runoff when this piece of lands is developed and how do we ensure the adjacent projects aren't damaged from the runoff caused by this development?

Response (Applicant): Like every other aspect of this proposal, we will be required to comply with city codes. Our development is outside those floodplains and those lines show up on this graphic and you can look at them. Our furthest north alley is outside the fringe flood area. We are showing detention in that area right now. There are some requirements that say we cannot increase runoff so there will be detention requirements so we can't add more volume to the creek. We'll also have to do some water quality improvements so we don't release unfiltered water into the creek. There is also an issue with non-native grass on the site. We can leave it or we can try to convert it to something that is more native. We are sensitive to that issue, we don't want to do anything to make those problems worse, and we can't make these problems worse due to the Land Use Code.

Response (Staff): I've spoken to our floodplain administrator, they are outside the 500-year flood fringe, and so they are compliant with FEMA and City standards.

Question: You've touched on this a little bit but I was wondering if you will be making amendments to the creek? You won't include changing the creek so it flows different, right?

Response (Applicant): No, we haven't done that.

Question: Can the city re-channel the creek?

Response (Staff): I am not a floodplain person but here is some information. We typically do not do that in developments unless it is part of a broader plan. Woodward has reconnected the Poudre with the floodplain. But here this is not as much of an issue. All we would do in this instance is take measures to enhance wildlife habitat.

Question: My question is about traffic in Stuart. Lots of people bike up and down Stuart. Traffic already seems heavy during rush hour. What requirements are there to keep the bicyclists safe? How do you do that? It's already hazardous now and I can't imagine adding this much more traffic to Stuart.

Response (Staff): What I heard you ask is that what are we doing to make sure bicyclists on Stuart are safe? One of the things we ask applicants to do is to evaluate traffic impacts for autos, bikes and pedestrians. They get grades from A-E for level of service. We will ask for this study from the applicant. Since we have only seen a conceptual plan we will scope the study with them and have them look at different issues. Let us know what your concerns are and we will make sure we look at them. I had the same concerns you have in mind as well. How many vehicles per day will this project add? What is access to the site like? Is the new street aligned with Cherokee? We will work on this with the applicant, as safety of biking is important to us. The vast majority of our bike crashes occur at intersections. The

most important thing to address is what access is like and can vehicles see bikes? The good thing is we have strong bike lanes along Stuart with parking on one side of the street only.

Question: What is the proposed number of students for the childcare center?

Response (Applicant): 35-40.

Question: And you're only proposing 8 parking spots for that?

Response (Applicant): Right now, but they have less parking than that right now on their current site. The school is Riversong Waldorf and they are already in your neighborhood. They are leasing a city owned house right now and they have been looking to a place to own. This is a great opportunity for them to move two doors down and still be in the neighborhood. They will be owners now as opposed to tenants. I am sure you see the kids already.

Question: Will there be an increase in students?

Response (Applicant): No, it will be the same. They may expand to another classroom in the future but this will be a lateral move.

Response (Applicant): I am director of Riversong. We range from 25-38 children. When we move we will keep the same amount of classrooms and we would only add 8-11 more children with another classroom in the future.

Question: I live just down the creek and I had a question about the drainage ponds to catch runoff. Can we hear more specifics about that? Have you done studies about mitigation?

Response (Applicant): That will be part of the study. There is a predevelopment condition that historic runoff is based on and then they will calculate new impervious for new runoff and all detention and water quality will be based on additional flows. I am not sure what that looks like right now but that is the process and the release rate will be the same as the historic rate.

Question: How can we access that information?

Response (Staff): When they submit their formal development application, everything will be online. You can get there on the Development Review site. Everything they give us is public information.

Question: This is a question for the developer. I live on Stuart and I am curious about interiors. How big will the units be and what will the sales price be?

Response (Applicant): We're not sure yet.

Response (Applicant): The building footprints shown are 1000-1200 square feet with garages on the main level and two stories. That may give you an idea. They will be around 3000 square feet.

Question: I am just curious if they will be high-end homes. What's the sales price likely to be?

Response (Applicant): Probably in the 400s.

Question: I live on Cherokee. Will these be 2 or 3 bedroom homes for families or will they be aimed at students with multiple cars?

Response (Applicant): We're not sure today. At this price point, these will be for sale, not a rental product and it will be for families, empty nesters, etc. We're not sure on the amount of bedrooms for each unit. It will probably be 2 or 3 bedrooms. I don't mean to be vague.

Comment: For those of us who have lived along Spring Creek we know this area is one of Ft. Collins' treasures. We see wild life, we enjoy walks, it's like magic there and we know we are fortunate to live there. It is important we protect that treasure and make sure it functions and it is still functioning with wildlife and prevent the wildlife from leaving. So, my question is I would like to know whether the 100 foot buffer, which deals with floodplain and the Spring Creek corridor, it looks like we have beaver activity with a couple of dams. We also have grey heron and I have seen it on this property. I have taken some lovely pictures of the heron on this site. I believe it is grey heron but I am not sure. We also have deer that come to the site. It's called the Mallard Nest Natural Area, which means there are water fowl nesting there. This all comes up in the Land Use Code and these features require 300-foot buffers. If they are blue heron it would be 800 feet. Now we are going to pave over it and wipe out these features. I want to make sure we are following the Land Use Code carefully to protect these treasures.

Response (Staff): Your community agrees and my position is to protect natural resources through private development. That is my job and you will hold me to it and I love that. I appreciate all of that information and please send us pictures for us to identify the bird in the picture. But your real question is about buffers. A buffer is a setback and a typical setback from Spring Creek is 100 feet. We also have other setbacks depending on the feature. One is 300 feet when we have a strong concentration of migratory waterfowl. This buffer applies in Fossil Creek and other areas with lots of waterfowl. We would not apply that 300-foot buffer to this area. The second buffer you referenced is our 825-foot buffer around a heron rookery. For this buffer to apply, a heron rookery is required, not one heron. We have a heron rookery on Harmony and I-25. We may see one or two herons here along Spring Creek but we would not apply that standard here. The standard that applies is the 100-foot buffer. An Ecological Characterization Study is required anytime a project is within 500 feet of SC. A professional consultant has to review against our standards and then we recommend what do with the project based on the Ecological Characterization Study. I usually wouldn't get that study for a while but the applicant has already provided it. 100 feet is what we have to work with, we have some of the strongest buffer standards in the country, and I am happy to enforce them. Many other communities only have 25 or 50-foot buffers. This 100-foot buffer does a good job and it will protect the wildlife corridor.

Question: Do you have any cost projections of how this will affect property taxes? People have owned their homes for years and our taxes will go up considerably.

Response (Staff): We have no way to answer that. Right now, the market is going through the roof on its own. The overall market affects it more than a single development.

Question: What do you plan to do with the irrigation ditch that goes under the school and goes through to the other property? I know the controls are still there on Cheyenne for this irrigation ditch.

Response (Applicant): We'll need to talk to you about that and get more details. Thanks for bringing that up. I have seen the cut but I did not know it was active.

Comment: We have an instance in our backyard and it is underground. We would like it to be plugged.

Response (Applicant): We will have to work through those details.

Question: I am curious if there are regulations with how the city deals with the aesthetics. The plan here is a wall of dwellings along the creek and then this north-south orientation that is something like what you would see in Philadelphia. You can see from the aerial that captures how aesthetically different this is and how the surrounding developments are crafted around the creek and the way the creek is laid on the land. It seems like this plan does not respect the location. I am just wondering since the bike trail goes along there, this impacts a lot of people in the city that will be going along there. It's a great trail, and it is pleasing to be there and I am thinking if you go along there with this development in place that it won't be as pleasant. What do you have on the books regarding aesthetics?

Response (Staff): There are horses in that field right now. What you're talking about is compatibility. We have a whole section in the Land Use Code about that. We had a long conversation about that and we think about how we interact with the built environment along Spring Creek and Stuart. Some of the things we think about are what are the building heights and building widths and that is why Roger was referencing density measurements of surrounding properties. How does this compare to other developments in terms of the amount of units and the design of the units? These are all things that are subjective. One person will like it and another one won't. We can use some basic metrics like scale, size, height, materials to lend to that and I like that you brought up the creek and make it work with the creek. That can help with compatibility. The city does get involved with that.

Response (Applicant): Thanks for coming to the meeting. As the last one in this area we have physical constraints and we have to take access right from Cherokee. We can do some small wriggles but we don't have that same luxury to lay out the property to mimic the creek as we don't have the space.

Comment: I will look at garages and alleys and 7 units and my view to the mountains will be completely destroyed.

Comment: I was blown away that there were 3 single-family detached homes on that site plan. I think the density is the problem. It won't fit in that well.

Response (Staff): I didn't want to mislead you in the meeting notice by indicating there is a mix of single-family detached and attached; this is the first I have seen the site plan as well.

Question: I came in late. I think I have a condo with a backyard that is right there and I am so concerned about the sunlight and how much shade this project will create because I have windows facing back and

just windows in front and I depend on sunlight. What will this do to my view and my sunlight my privacy?

Response (Staff): Are you on the west or east? Part of the submittal is they have to do a shadow study and we can look at things like do they have a deck that looks into your backyard, etc. This is all part of the review process.

Comment: We have the gradation too and I have a wall so that there is that much gradation so that is a real concern for me.

Response (Staff): Absolutely. There is a lot of grading on their site as well and that is a good way to reduce height. I don't know where we are at this point.

Comment: My comment is density is a concern as far as the ratio of single-family to duplex and how it fits into the neighborhood.

Question: There's been a lot of talk about compatibility with density but nothing about architectural styles and this architectural style does not fit with anything I see around it. It seems like something out of another era that is really incompatible. Is there anything the city can do to influence the style?

Response (Staff): We don't have anything that dictates style. I don't think we want them to build something from the 70s but something that emulates the scale so when we talk about mass, size, and height of buildings that it fits into the neighborhood. We will bring these concerns forward. From a compatibility perspective, we want them to fit in.

Comment: He expressed my concern. There is another project that has a similar style to this in another part of Fort Collins and I don't think it fits. They have multiple kinds of materials in each building and it doesn't fit the naturalness of the stream.

Response (Staff): All of those things can be worked out. After tonight we will take the comments we received and think about this based on these comments.

Question: I live on Cherokee and I am concerned about density and parking. I don't know what it looks like compared to the other projects in the area but how much parking will you be providing?

Response (Applicant): Each unit will have a 2-car garage, 2 spaces on the driveway and one spot on street. We will also provide 8 parking spots for the school.

Question: How does that compare to surrounding developments?

Response (Staff): Most have 2-car garages or carports and they get parking on street. Some of these do not have enough room on driveways. It could be similar. I went through Brookhaven and Springmeadows but there is no auxiliary parking really but people make it work.

Comment: There's not parking allowed on the street in Brookhaven.

Comment: Pinnacle has auxiliary parking and additional parking in addition to garages.

Response (Staff): 2 parking spaces per unit meets the Land Use Code depending on how many beds they have per unit. We don't have that information for that right now. When we talk about the road network and bike safety this is important.

Response (Staff): We'll work with the developers and school to figure out circulation. We work with schools a lot and we try hard to not have so many of those queueing vehicles on the roads. It depends on the kind of road the developer is looking to provide. We don't want cars queueing on Stuart.

Question: What elementary school will they go to?

Response (Staff): I think it's O'Dea.

Comment: Living on the north side of Stuart, they have to cross Stuart to get to O'Dea and there is no crosswalk.

Response (Staff): In the next couple of months and we will address that for bikes and peds. This is a problem for Lesher students as well. We will install a school zone along Stuart close to the crossing at Stover and they will be flashing 20 MPH and will be timed to coincide with the Lesher school day most likely and will include permanent radar speed feedback. We have heard some concerns on Stuart and we have put radar up. We will do that here as well and the speed limit will change while school is in session. Those will go in at the double crosswalks where the jog in Stover is.

Question: I was curious do you know how long this will take to build? Will they be renovating the current house or adding to it?

Response (Applicant): It will be market driven based on sales for the residential part. The school itself will take the two existing classrooms and just move them. There will be some renovation starting next summer or fall. We would like to move in fall of 2016.

Question: I have a question about parking is there city guideline for parking? The Summit is a disaster.

Response (Staff): There are requirements based on the amount of beds. For single-family detached residential, the requirement is 2 parking spaces if you have less than 40 feet of frontage. If it's 3 bedrooms, it will be 2 parking spaces. If it's 4 bedrooms, they will need 3 parking spaces. This will all be part of the analysis when we get more information.

Question: I would like to know what other developments the developer has done to get a comparison. Also, what is going to happen to the house that the city owns where school is right now?

Response (Applicant): We are under lease until fall 2016. We're not sure what will happen after that. I can follow up about the city building. **NOTE:** The city-owned property (906 E. Stuart) which is the current location of the Riversong School may be sold if the school moves. But, there is not a final decision yet.

Response (Applicant): I currently have an affordable senior project in downtown Englewood and also a senior project in Fort Collins off of Harmony. Those are all multifamily. I've been in the business for 35

years with mixed-use, residential, retail, and multifamily. We currently have a project in Old Towne Arvada. My work has been in just about every city in Colorado and as far east as Ohio.

Question: Does the developer have a website?

Response (Applicant): www.goldbergprop.com

Question: We live right next to this property so all of this affects us including our privacy, traffic, parking, everything basically. One of our concerns is that as traffic will come in and that traffic will go into alleyway. The alley ways seem narrow. Arrowhead's alleys are twice as wide. When the cars turn into the alley their lights will shine right into our property. What kind of fences and landscaping will you put up in those areas to mitigate?

Response (Applicant): We haven't gotten there yet and there will be fences. We are not sure about what type and how high, though. We can talk to the neighbors about that when we get there. There is a landscape buffer required and so that will be landscaped and we will provide an accompanying fence but none of that has been detailed. As the plans progress you will be able to see those things and comment in greater detail.

Comment: I have an opinion not a question. This is my home right here. We have lived here since '71. We enjoy this meadow. There is nothing that says we have to have a development there, especially the way it is drawn up. This is too many homes. My comment is we do not have to say we want this development. How many folks would like to have it?

Response (Staff): We're not here for a vote.

Question: Please give me your name afterwards and I will fight it.

Response (Staff): Complaining will not stop development. Constructive criticism can make it more comfortable and more compatible with the neighborhoods and Spring Creek. Protests at City Council and the Planning & Zoning Board just make them angry.

Question: Can you address the process. The developer would like to have 29 units and residents think it is too high. What happens now?

Response (Staff): I heard a number of comments before, I have spoken and met with you and talked to Roger, and we have to work on the design to make it more compatible. Some of the things include architectural compatibility to allow sunlight to come between buildings, more green space, which will result in a reduction of density. I will not guarantee anything. I need more information and I would like to do comparisons of the area around here. This is a nuanced process. The numbers say 3-9 dwelling units per acre are allowed and they are hard numbers and they are meeting the numerical requirements. But it's the soft stuff we have work on. It might be a good idea to have another meeting when we get more information.

Comment: Please.

Comment: I have questions about the compatibility issue, which dovetails into density and green space and other things. If you are dropping \$400-\$450,000 on a home, you will have more than 2 cars. Extra parking will flow out not to east or west but to Cherokee drive. If you notice the compatibility of Cherokee Drive, the pattern of the neighborhood, the pattern was hardly any parking on street. I am asking everyone to please consider keeping the compatibility of that neighborhood in mind and give people enough parking so that the compatibility of our neighborhood is not affected.

Comment: Back to the subject of preserving Fort Collins' treasures: what we know is that this entire Spring Creek area contains century's worth of marvelous topsoil. Really rich topsoil is why this area is so beautiful. We have seen another development dig it up and it sits there in a huge pile. It is sort of like gold. There aren't many places that have the potential for farmland in Northern Colorado. Shire is using this soil to grow food for all of us and it is a shame to pave over all of this with concrete and to have that topsoil be gone forever. It would be much better to stop development and insist that something uses this topsoil.

Question: I have a question. I was wondering, are there regulations or plans to mitigate for the sediment that erodes into the creek during construction?

Response (Applicant): Yes, we will have to have a drainage and erosion control plan to install before construction especially on northern border. It will be monitored during construction.

Question: How many feet high is 2.5 stories?

Response (Applicant): Stories don't necessarily equate to feet. One example is walkouts. Walkouts have basements that open onto a backyard that is below grade at the front of the house. In those cases, you have to take the average height of the house to determine how many stories it is.

Question: How high will these structures be?

Response (Applicant): Less than 30' on the front side.

Question: Can the side on Spring Creek be taller?

Response (Staff): We have specific standards about that. There's a lot of how a story is calculated in the Land Use Code. We will need to look at what 30' looks like next to buildings next to it. Compatibility is the most important thing to consider. 2.5 stories is a number but compatibility is a different story in how we experience it.

Question: On the density issue, could you review what happened behind the church and where they had to change the density after the neighborhood meetings and what caused it to be changed? Are you aware of that one? It's on the southeast corner of Drake and Lemay.

Response (Staff): I am not directly familiar with that one. The development proposals change all the time after neighborhood meetings. That is why we have them so early. Many of these components discussed tonight are based on a very preliminary design, just lines on an aerial photo.

Question: Will there be basements allowed and will that be part of the two story calculation?

Response (Applicant): No, the only times basements are counted as part of the calculation is when they are exposed. If it is a true basement, it is not counted in height.

Question: Are basements allowed due to the floodplain?

Response (Applicant): I'm not sure if we have groundwater issues on this site. It is a possibility.

Question: I live in Spring Meadows. How close to the property line would this development be and how will it affect unit 1713 specifically?

Response (Applicant): So I can give you a guesstimate. If there is a 20' alley and 8' setback, it will be a minimum of 28' from property line. Without an alley, it will be 8' away. It depends on the site plan. There has to be at least 5' between the property line and the alley. There will be a landscape buffer so it could be more than that. So in short, this will likely be 28-33 feet away from the property line depending on how it lays out.

Question: I have a Riversong question, what determines if Riversong will move or not to the new development? Why would the school not move and if you do not move what will you consider to go in its place?

Response (Applicant): I hope the school moves. We are doing this for the school. We want to help give them a home. The current house will stay. We are giving them the house.

Comment: So they will move. Thanks.

Comment: I just want to make a comment. I lived in a development similar back east and I wouldn't live in a similar style town house again. The biggest problem is cars. They are all over the place. People put things in the garage and that keeps cars outside. You have narrow alleys on your site plan. We had bigger ones in my old townhouse and we still had cars everywhere. With that density, we had 6 homes in a row.

Comment: A good question to ask yourself is how much will this development decrease property values?

Question: We have 66 additional cars, theoretically, being introduced to the neighborhood due to this development. How much will this increase traffic through Indian Hills? I drive through there now and I live next door.

Response (Staff): It's one of the things we will ask them to take a look at in their traffic study. There are some national standards of trips created based on the number of teachers, students, homes, etc. We are going to see what the impacts are on the roads. The intent and design is that collectors collect cars and take them to arterials. Our local roads are not intended to be cut throughs. It's legal because they are public streets. We have neighborhood traffic mitigation programs if you have concerns about

parking or cut through traffic. We have a dedicated person who works really well with neighborhoods. Give us a call and we will work on some options.

Question: What is an option?

Response (Staff): Radar signs, the residential parking permit program if you are experiencing parking issues, speed humps, etc.

Comment: I was talking about increased traffic.

Response (Staff): Again, if speeding is an issue it is a different issue from parking. I can give you Fred's contact information and you can set up a meeting and talk about it.

Comment: The time to talk about these issues is the planning stage. If you live close by the issues become real and they aren't solved after the fact so I think reducing density that needs to be addressed now.

Question: When will you have another meeting?

Response (Staff): They haven't submitted a formal application yet so I am not sure. We also have the Planning & Zoning Board meeting later in the process, which will give you another opportunity to voice concerns to decision makers. Also, we have multiple rounds of review when they submit. We give them a list of comments they need to address with their revised submittal and sometimes they don't go far enough so we have additional rounds of review. We typically have 2-5 rounds of review. So I would say certainly after one round of review and you can always contact me and we can sit and look at the plans at any time. Your comments are good throughout the process. Call or email me anytime. We will post the plans online as well.

Question: Did you specifically say density as a specific talking point for when the developer updates their plan?

Response (Staff): Yes.

Question: Will you send out an email to the list about another neighborhood meeting?

Response (Staff): Yes, and a mailer as well. There will also be a mailer before the Planning & Zoning Board meeting as well.