

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Violet Township Zoning Commission

July 16, 2019

Mr. Biancamano called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and roll was called.

Members present: Mark Decker, Robert Bussom, Steve Palsgrove, and John Biancamano. Also present were Kelly Sarko, Zoning Inspector and Jennifer Huber, Township Legal Counsel.

Mr. Biancamano noted the first item on the agenda was a continuation of the public hearing for Case Number 04-ZC-2019. He asked if there were any updates to the application. Ms. Sarko said that she had received an email from the applicant addressing concerns she expressed during the last meeting as well as her concerns with the Development Text.

Mr. Josh Barkan, M/I Homes, 3 Easton Oval, Columbus, David Hodge, Underhill & Hodge, 8000 Walton Parkway, Suite 260, New Albany, Ohio 43054 were present on behalf of the application. Mr. Barkan noted they had made changes to stagger the road to the south due to concerns expressed during the last meeting. This change eliminated one lot making a total number of lots 137. He commented that most of the text changes were made as requested. They added a tot lot as well as the requested landscaping along lot number one. Landscaping was added along the northern boundary but does not include mounding due to drainage concerns.

There was a general discussion about including the retention ponds as part of the open space calculation. Ms. Sarko explained that the area containing the retention ponds needs to have walking trails or paths and explained the application is requesting a divergence from this requirement. Mr. Barkan stated that they were already over the open space requirement and they were putting in walking trails in the area connecting to Heron Crossing where they were more likely to be used.

Mr. Bussom commented that he was concerned about the house spacing, specifically that the distance between a cantilevered fireplace and the property line would be 48 inches. Mr. Barkan commented that the spacing is tight and this is the trend in housing. He does not believe this will hinder the price, as this is what the consumers want.

One Commission member said that he does not believe there is parity between the two neighborhoods and noted the front façade is densely packed that accessing the open space would required residents to walk further. Mr. Barkan said this is because the MORPC plan has the density of homes getting tighter as you get closer to Refugee Road. The proposed development is actually a less intense use than what the MORPC plan called for. Clustering the units allows for more open space and this is where conservation

development comes in. Homeowners do not live in their side yards anymore. They want more green space they do not have to maintain. Mr. Bussom commented that having the houses so close together does not allow a homeowner to get anything into their backyard without encroaching on their neighbor's property. Mr. Barkan said there was plenty of room to access the backyard.

Mr. Biancamano commented that, if heavy equipment was needed for some type of future repair or maintenance, the distance between the houses would make it difficult to access the backyard. Mr. Barkan said that they had had no problem with other neighborhoods with similar density. Another Commission member said that might be the case upfront, but down the road, as the neighborhood matures and the developer is gone, there could be issues. Mr. Barkan said that his company had been around for 40 years and they were willing to help homeowners address issues long after a house is built.

Mr. Biancamano noted that the drawings show trees along the street. Ms. Sarko commented that the applicant would have to ask permission to place trees in the tree lawn. She said in other subdivisions, street trees are normally outside the right-of-way, on private property, and the homeowner is responsible for the maintenance of the trees. Mr. Palsgrove asked if that was in the subdivision regulations for the county. Ms. Sarko said the county does not like trees in the right-of-way, but it is mainly a township issue. Mr. Biancamano asked who owns the tree lawn. Ms. Sarko said it is in the public right-of-way and the township owns the street. The applicant will review the tree placement. Mr. Decker suggested a uniform, specific distance from the sidewalk be provided in the Development Text for street trees. Ms. Sarko said they should be planted uniformly. It was agreed the Development Text would state "within five feet" of the right-of-way regarding tree placement.

Mr. Biancamano inquired whether this subdivision and the adjoining existing subdivision (Heron Crossing) would have the same homeowners association. Mr. Hodge said yes.

Mr. Biancamano asked what the price point would be for this development. Mr. Barkan said the average in Heron Crossing is \$335,000 to \$340,000 and they are confident they will stay at those numbers.

Mr. Decker said that he still had an issue with the trees. He explained that if the trees were planted within five feet of the sidewalk, they would eventually destroy the sidewalk and become a problem for pedestrians and bicyclists. Ms. Sarko commented that the trees in Winding Creek might offer an example of spacing. Mr. Hodge said they would ask their landscape architect for direction. Mr. Decker said that he is willing to let a professional tell them what works best.

Ms. Sarko asked if front porches could be required. Mr. Barkan said they encourage it, but it is not required. He noted that many of the design choices have porches. It is a matter of diversity in the front elevations and the buyer cost. Ms. Sarko noted the Development Text references front porch living.

There was a discussion regarding divergences.

Mr. Biancamano asked about the overall density. Ms. Sarko said that the zoning code allows a net density of two units per acre. Mr. Barkan commented that the MORPC plan called for 2 to 3 units per acres in this area and the proposed development would be 2.66 units per acre. The extra green space condenses the homes onto smaller lots.

Mr. Bussom said he thinks that the neighborhood is unbalanced with late buyers not having the same equity as buyers located closer to neighborhood amenities. He commented if lots were taken out, it would make it feel more open and more like the rest of the subdivision.

Ms. Sarko noted the properties to the south of this development are designated for mixed-use commercial development, which could include multi-family units. She said Refugee Road will be a commercial corridor. From the core commercial area, intensity of use will decrease as you move away from Refugee Road. The smaller lots are toward the southern portion of the development with larger lots to the north.

Mr. Biancamano said that with this type of changing density, the homeowners toward the south will have different expectations than the homeowners to the north. He asked if a home bordering on the commercial development will have a lower price. Mr. Barkan said that in all of their communities, they have different pricing for lots, which is based on a number of factors.

Mr. Biancamano asked which section would be marketed first. Mr. Barkan said they would likely start with the northern section due to road connection issues. Mr. Biancamano said he saw the logic of the narrow lots in the southern portion. Mr. Decker said that those homes would be attractive to the millennial market. Mr. Barkan agreed there were likely to be many young families and compared this development to one in Jefferson Township with 54-foot lots.

Mr. Biancamano asked what would happen to Pickerington Road. Mr. Barkan said that there would be a widening and they are working through the traffic study with the county. There could be a half to full widening. There will not be a new traffic light. He estimated there would be about 1,300 trips per day from the neighborhood.

Mr. Decker asked if M/I Homes as plans for properties to the south. Mr. Barkan said not at this time. If Heron Crossing and this proposal continue to go well, perhaps there could be an opportunity. The properties to the south are a bit more complicated because they are sewered differently and there are a few things to work out with that, but M/I Homes would love to continue building in Violet Township.

Mr. Decker asked if the denser housing closer to Refugee Rd would be something like a condominium complex. Mr. Barkan said M/I Homes would not be doing that because they do not build attached condominiums or multi-family units.

Ms. Sarko asked that the applicant to include the following in the development text:

- Breakdown the acreage for the each open space areas and to specify the ownership and maintenance of each open space area
- Relocate the divergences to the back of the Development Text
- She said that she would like a uniform style and color fence along the right-of-way of Pickerington Road to ensure consistency. Mr. Barkan said there will be mounding and landscaping so the fences might not be seen.
- She would like a reference to the stub streets that will provide access to future development to the south
- She asked if the spec homes and model homes would have at least a stone or masonry water table like those in Heron Crossing. Mr. Barkan said they would.
- Ms. Sarko noted accessory buildings are not allowed, the Development Text requires pool equipment to be enclosed.
- Ms. Sarko referenced the images of the broken field tiles and asked that the Development Text say if the wetlands are non-jurisdictional. The Preliminary Investigation of Surface Waters shows non-jurisdictional drainage swale and non-jurisdictional tile blow out. She asked they use the words “non-jurisdictional”.
- Ms. Sarko said that phasing is mentioned in two different areas of the Development Text which contradict each other.

Ms. Sarko offered to meet with Mr. Barkan to discuss the Development Text.

Mr. Decker asked how concerned the commission was about the lot sizing. Mr. Bussom said he was concerned with the overall density of the property and would like it less than 2.67. Mr. Hodge said that after the last meeting they felt they had accommodated the suggestions from the Commission and staff. He added that the proposed density is less than what was suggested in the Comprehensive Refugee Road Corridor Plan.

Mr. Bussom asked how many lots would be lost if the southern portion had the same density as the northern portion of the development. Mr. Hodge said the reason the density is so much higher in the southern portion is because a massive open space was added in the center of the project which would be lost if the density was decreased. He stated that if the commission could quantify how many lots to take off the plan, he could

work with that more easily. Mr. Decker suggested that they take out six lots. That would be one house out of each section. Mr. Hodge observed that in the end, people driving through the subdivision would not be able to tell the difference if six lots are removed. They are trying to create a neighborhood where the residents do not have to maintain a large yard and that has open space for recreation nearby.

Mr. Biancamano asked if there were any other concerns. None were expressed. He asked that Ms. Sarko and Mr. Barkan meet to go over the text issues.

Mr. Palsgrove made the motion to continue this public hearing until the next regularly scheduled meeting on August 20, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. at the Violet Township Administrative offices located at 10190 Blacklick Eastern Road. Mr. Bussom seconded the motion. Roll call vote: All aye. Motion carried.

Mr. Palsgrove made a motion to adjourn at 8:48 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Decker. Roll call vote: all aye. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Rowell, Secretary

Date: _____

John Biancamano, Chair

Bob Bussom, Commission Member

Mark Decker, Commission Member