



MINUTES

DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 17, 2022

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Sanford.

Commissioners Present: Chair Sanford, Commissioners Brennan, Morgan, and Shore

Absent: Commissioners Dillon (Excused), Gilbert (Excused), Ikeda (Excused), and Price (Excused)

Staff Present: Minnie Dhaliwal, Director, CP&D
Christian Geitz, Planning Manager
Holly Keeton, Senior Planner
Stephen Padua, Long Range Planning Manager

2. Approval of Minutes

a) CHAIR SANFORD asked for corrections or comments regarding the July 6, 2022 Minutes. There were none and the Minutes were approved.

b) CHAIR SANFORD asked for corrections or comments regarding the July 20, 2022 Minutes. There were none and the Minutes were approved.

3. Public Comment (General)

Padua stated that there were no requests to speak to General Comment.

4. Regular Business (00:03)

a) Towns on 7th Community Conference, (I)

Presented by:

Holly Keeton, Senior Planner

Alex Clohesey, Millbrandt Architects representing Blue Fern Homes

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Keeton gave the staff presentation.

Clohesey gave the applicant presentation.

CHAIR SANFORD opened the floor for Public Comments and Questions. (00:29)

- John Falstrom, 885 - 7th Avenue Northwest, stated not being anti-growth but having concerns regarding density, traffic, parking and the environmental impact of the project. Regarding density, the proposal is for a 725% increase in occupancy. Current zoning is mixed-use residential which allows for 14.52 dwelling units per acre, translating to a maximum of units 18.87 units here.

Clohesey replied that from a density standpoint, the site is currently vacant land or single-family homes. The Comprehensive Plan designation for the parcel is multi-family use going forward. City intent is believed to be to bring more density to the sites. The proposal is in alignment with city goals and current zoning. In this situation, the Floor Area Ration (F.A.R.) mechanism is what is used to govern density per Central Issaquah Design Standards and the proposal is for 0.93, well below the threshold.

Falstrom stated that regarding traffic impacts to 7th Avenue Northwest, the street is less than a normal legal street width, 30-feet, with parking allowed on each side, and with parked cars less than the 20-feet required by Fire code. The street was never intended to serve current traffic volume. Regarding parking, the residents on 7th Avenue Northwest already see the impact of other nearby developments and businesses. With 29 units, there will be many visitors needing parking spaces. The city will need to acknowledge how construction traffic is managed during the project. Falstrom stated hoping to speak with a Planning department representative regarding pedestrian improvements.

Clohesey replied that points being raised are valid concerns particularly to those living in the area who will receive direct impact. In relation to parking and pedestrians, 7th Avenue Northwest is currently unclassified in the Transportation Plan, but part of the development process here. In relation to street width, two 10-foot travel lanes will be provided for a total of 20-feet. Parking will be outside of the lanes. The issue is dictated by Public Works and city standards. Impacts to further down 7th Avenue Northwest will fall outside of the scope of the project and an issue for the city Transportation department in terms of long-term goals for the street. Parking is always of concern and an effort has been made to provide two stalls for every unit in a garage. Zoning allows for less, but for market value and practicality the reality is that most families will have two cars. Guest parking is not a requirement by the zoning code but is being provided as an amenity to keep cars off the street.

- John Traeger, 710 - 7th Avenue Northwest, stated being a board member of the Bridgewater Place Condominium Homeowners' Association as well as having served on the Issaquah Development Commission. Building site design appears in context with the neighborhood and Central Issaquah style which is appreciated. Lighting needs

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to be sensitive to second floor bedrooms across the street. Speed on 7th Avenue Northwest have been high for years and a solution such as a speed table has been asked for in the past, Curb, gutter and sidewalk installed on the entire street length would be helpful. The single driveway in and out of the proposed project may need more consideration. Traeger requested that the existing utility pole on 7th Avenue Northwest be undergrounded when utilities are installed for the proposed project. Traeger asked if there will be gas lines, or if the facility will be entirely electric, and if there will be sufficient power for electric car charging. Traeger asked for the construction vehicle flow plan, noting considerable traffic during the school year in mornings and afternoons. There is insufficient space on 7th Avenue Northwest for a truck to turn into the proposed site and a suggestion was that construction vehicles enter on a temporary work driveway from Newport Way. Traeger asked where construction staff will park and suggested that off-site parking be secured.

Clohesey replied that regarding frontage improvements, the applicant team responsibility is only the portion in front of the site, and this will be redeveloped in alignment with the plans of the city. The access point on 7th Avenue Northwest was an intentional choice based on safety concerns as well as separation requirements by Public Works. A plan for construction is a requirement in the permit process and impacts to surrounding rights-of-way need to be coordinated as a part of that process. Clohesey did not believe gas is being proposed for the site at this time. Electric utilities will be developed with guidance from Public Works and the understanding is that power will be undergrounded along the frontage. Electrical Vehicle charging stations have been adopted in State code and required. A plan for external lighting will be developed with industry best standards to minimize impacts off the site and to the environment. Units will be provided with blinds to help mitigate light impacts outside of the unit.

- James Carr, a neighbor to the proposed project, stated that drainage will be a problem for the site, currently underwater at least one month every year.

Clohesey replied that soils on the site will not allow for infiltration and a vault is being proposed to handle all on-site stormwater, as well as additional facilities to handle right-of-way improvements. The stormwater manual is very specific regarding requirements.

Carr asked if the site will be fenced during construction as there are children walking to and from school.

Clohesey replied yes, a typical construction management plan is developed throughout the permitting process.

Carr asked if the site will be fenced or open when completed.

Clohesey replied that all street frontages will be open, but privacy fencing will be proposed along shared property lines.

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Carr asked if there will be only one ingress and egress.

Clohesey replied correct.

- Amy Carr, owner of a fitness studio next to the proposed site, asked about effects to visibility for the business entrance. Adding more traffic from the new residents while there is already very high traffic during specific times of the day will cause serious issues for safety. Carr asked if there will be traffic control provided during the project.

Clohesey replied that there is a Traffic Engineer on the team who will offer recommendations regarding mitigating effects on surrounding areas. Issaquah is working on a plan to address vehicle volume along Newport Way.

Carr asked if soils will be moved in and out from 7th Avenue Northwest.

Clohesey stated that the final vehicle entrance will be on 7th Avenue Northwest, but at this point in the project a construction plan in consultation with city staff has not been developed yet. There are three frontage options on the site.

Carr asked for the timeframe of the build-out.

Clohesey replied that the process begins with SEPA and other reviews with a timeline of two to three months. After reviews, the project will come back to the Development Commission for approval and the permit is then applied for. Construction will probably not begin for 12 to 18 months.

[Unidentified Speaker, not at microphone] asked a question inaudible on audio. Clohesey replied that the roundabout design plan is being developed and not set.

CHAIR SANFORD stated that comments and questions must be made at the microphone to be recorded for the record and reminded that there is a five-minute speaking limit.

- Amy Quinn, 708 - 7th Avenue Northwest, stated that many families walk children to and from the school on Northwest Holly Street and a traffic circle is an unsafe place to walk. Quinn asked if the proposed complex would have facilities for young families, either for residents only or for the neighborhood, as the school playground area is not available during school hours or during after school programming. The curb, gutter and sidewalk should be developed up to Northwest Juniper Street.

Clohesey replied that providing a safe crossing at the roundabout will be driven by city design plans. Regarding on-site amenities, because of the size of the development a mechanism in code is triggered to require an additional 400 feet of amenity area. The final arrangement will be determined later in the process. The sidewalk will be subject to city development standards.

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- Jerry Bernstein, Bridgewater Place, asked what the setback for the edge of the building to the 7th Avenue Northwest sidewalk will be, for clarification regarding the number of floors proposed, and how compatible the project will be with Bridgewater Place across the street.

Clohesey replied that setbacks will be in alignment with standards for the Central Issaquah District. The creation of a street wall along frontages is encouraged for a sense of street edge. A setback could be anywhere from zero to 10-feet. The proposal ranges from a two to four-foot setback from the edge of the property line and the sidewalk in relation will be in final plans for frontage improvements.

Bernstein asked if setbacks will be seen in the site plan and stated that a wider setback would be more compatible with the property across the street.

Clohesey replied that city requirements for design standards are required to be followed. There are gaps between buildings providing opportunities for Through-Block Passages. The concept is for three-story units, but the area under the steeply pitched roofs is proposed to be habitable and an amenity to residents. The city Architectural and Urban Design Manual directs articulations on street faces with varying heights.

Bernstein asked when the proposed architectural design will be available along 7th Avenue Northwest.

Clohesey replied a full set of rendered elevations will be submitted to the design review as well as example building plans, available as a part of the submittal.

- Connie Marsh (virtual) stated that the project does not appear to be within the Central Issaquah Plan and that the design manual may not apply. Regarding transportation, SEPA may require examination of considerable impacts to Northwest Juniper Street. Marsh asked for a description of how development will be changed to fit in with a future land changes, if the Through-Block Passage will be public, and if there will be interim traffic improvements during development. The Geotechnical Report indicates shallow groundwater level and Critical Areas, and fine soils will not support structures. The amount of soil that will need to be brought in will have significant impacts on the neighborhood and handling water on the site. Marsh asked where Baker tanks will be located. Email lists for adjacent neighbors were a suggestion to keep everyone informed of progress and plans weekly along with a number to call if there is an issue. The city should require earth moving and exterior grading during the summer season to minimize impacts to the school and wet soil stability issues.

Clohesey replied that part of the proposal in the pre-application process is working with the city regarding the proposed roundabout project. The site plan on the southwest corner of six parcels is dedicating a triangular area for the roundabout. The area south of the site will not be a part of the proposal and will be developed in accordance with plans of the city. Interim improvements are being examined by the applicant team with city staff.

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Marsh stated that the street design has been worked on for thirty years and asked if the interim design would be for the straight road.

Clohesey replied that the final resolution of interim improvements is what is being worked through now in the process.

Marsh asked what will happen to buildings if the street does include a roundabout.

Clohesey replied that the buildings would still be fronting the public right-of-way and public sidewalk would be included in improvements. The buildings along the frontage would create a street presence in those areas.

There were no further requests to speak by the public.

CHAIR SANFORD opened Commissioner comments and questions for the applicant. (01:17)

COMMISSIONER BRENNAN asked the applicant to explain how the buildings will interface with pedestrian space and entries and if there will be covers. Clohesey replied that pedestrian entries are all either on the frontage or on the interior Through-Block Passage. There will be a covered entry porch or stoop with landscaping and other façade treatments at a human scale. COMMISSIONER BRENNAN stated that privacy and security for residents will need to be incorporated also and more information regarding the interface will be helpful at the next presentation. COMMISSIONER BRENNAN asked for clarification that the Through-Block Passage is open to the public and Clohesey replied yes. COMMISSIONER BRENNAN asked for clarification regarding the interface at Newport Way and 7th Avenue Northwest. Clohesey replied that all details have not been worked out at this point in the design process, but conceptually, the 7th Avenue Northwest area would be a courtyard space framed by buildings on both sides. Units would have front entries fronting the space with a 10-foot sidewalk. On the Newport Way side, the site geometry is interesting and there is an opportunity for trellising and arbors, creating an entryway to the site.

COMMISSIONER MORGAN stated appreciating efforts to meet the Arts and Crafts style and asked for clarification regarding meeting pitch requirements. Clohesey replied design will be worked with to arrive at 10-12. On the rear side of units proposed are some modulated bays at a lower roof slope to define the element. The applicant is open to feedback. The elevation that was on screen at the request of COMMISSIONER MORGAN is broadly representative of the goal. COMMISSIONER MORGAN asked for clarification regarding arched entryways desired in Arts and Crafts. Clohesey replied that a rectilinear opening is proposed, highlighted with ornate brick work but that the applicant is open to working with design suggestions. COMMISSIONER MORGAN asked for clarification regarding a discrepancy in numbers around roof heights in the staff report. Clohesey replied that as code is understood, the measurement is taken at the mid-point of the roof, but the numbers requested for the staff report were for the peak, and subsequently the question had been anticipated during the meeting. COMMISSIONER MORGAN stated concern about the east side of Building One facing 7th

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Avenue Northwest as well as Building Four facing 7th Avenue Northwest, a building side. Views of the project from across 7th Avenue Northwest will be needed. Clohesey replied that the façades along 7th Avenue Northwest will be addressed in the submitted packet.

COMMISSIONER MORGAN stated that it would be helpful to know how the city will be addressing street improvements and when.

COMMISSIONER SHORE asked if there will be a crosswalk across 7th Avenue Northwest or Northwest Holly Street, away from the roundabout. Clohesey stated that traffic scoping will generate recommendations, not yet addressed in the proposal. COMMISSIONER SHORE asked for clarification regarding walls. Clohesey replied a landscape feature to delineate space. COMMISSIONER SHORE asked if there will be site retaining walls and Clohesey replied no, not at this time.

CHAIR SANFORD asked why the overall goal for townhomes had been reduced from 30 to 29. Clohesey replied that in the pre-application stage, the concept showed 32 townhomes but revised to accommodate the intent of the Through-Block Passage as well as responding to the feedback received at the Pre-Application presentation. Drainage, vault location and tree retention also were factors. CHAIR SANFORD asked if there would be a secondary passage, mentioned on page 40. Clohesey replied no, that the mention of a secondary passage was an oversight on the Pre-Application site plan. CHAIR SANFORD asked if darker masonry is appropriate at the proposed height for the Arts and Crafts style. The horizontal windows on the first level are not a typical Arts and Crafts effect and multiple smaller windowpanes are more typical. Colors and materials will be helpful. Clohesey replied that material boards had been brought to the meeting and could be examined. Clohesey asked if the comment regarding windows was about window size or the grids within the windows. CHAIR SANFORD replied the grids within the windows, detail. CHAIR SANFORD stated appreciating the awareness of the applicant of city sustainability goals.

COMMISSIONER BRENNAN stated that there had been many comments from the public regarding pedestrian safety and traffic impacts, and how the concerns will be addressed will be important going forward due to higher density in developments.

5. Reports

a) City Council Update (01:38)

Presented by Minnie Dhaliwal, Director, CP&D

Dhaliwal introduced the new Planning Manager, Christian Geitz, who is the new Development Commission staff liaison.

Dhaliwal stated that the Title 18 update is at part six of six. The last meeting regarding part six will be August 25, 2022. A link to the packet will be sent to Commissioners which is regard to Process and Procedures and new criteria for site development review. Dhaliwal stated appreciating all input received.

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6. Other Business/Announcements

a) Upcoming Schedule

There were no announcements.

7. Adjournment

- With no further business to conduct, CHAIR SANFORD adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Garza, LLC
Recording Secretary