

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 21, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

In Person: Eric Prause, Chairman
Patrick Kennedy, Vice Chairman
Nicole Clemons
Teresa Ike
Chris Schoeneberger

ALTERNATE MEMBERS SITTING:

In Person: Bonnie Potocki
Carlos Jusem

ALTERNATES PRESENT:

Electronically: Spencer Walker

ABSENT: Michael Stebe, Secretary
Yamuna Menon

ALSO PRESENT:

In Person: Gary Anderson, Director of Planning
Megan Pilla, Principal Development Planner
Electronically: Nancy Martel, Recording Secretary

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing at 7:00 P.M. The Secretary read the legal notice when the call was made.

HARI KUPPURAJ (Continued from February 6, 2023) – Zone change for a 2.64-acre site from Rural Residence to Planned Residential Development zone at 30 Bidwell Street. – PRD Zone Change – Preliminary Site Plan (PRD-0006-2022)

Ms. Pilla updated the members that the application is for a PRD zone change and preliminary site development plan only. The applicant does have the option of starting with the preliminary plan and submitting a detailed plan later, which is what the applicant has chosen to do. The Commission should be considering whether the proposal meets the requirements for a PRD zone, as specified in Art. II, Sec. 7 of the regulations, particularly for multi-family housing, as well as whether it is in line with the recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Ms. Pilla reported that Staff did have a chance to finish reviewing the application. They provided some feedback to the applicant, who quickly turned around one more set of revisions. At this time, all Staff comments have been satisfactorily addressed, with the exception of a couple of

discussion items relating to sight distances for cars turning out of the proposed driveway and the width of the proposed driveway, which the applicant can address if they wish.

Mr. Hari Kuppuraj, the applicant for the PRD zone change application, introduced himself. He stated that the property is 2.6 acres and they are proposing 26 units of townhomes, four buildings with six or seven units each. Mr. Kuppuraj displayed the preliminary site plan as well as the elevations and floor plans.

The open space criteria have been addressed, according to Mr. Kuppuraj, as well as traffic, access and parking. There are 61 proposed parking spaces, exceeding the minimum requirement. The traffic impact, provided by Freeman Companies, indicated that the proposed development would generate 154 trips to and from the site each weekday, with an average of 11 trips during the morning peak hour and 8 during the afternoon peak hour. The report concludes that the development is not anticipated to have a significant impact on traffic and the surrounding road network.

Mr. Kuppuraj reported that the site does not currently have utility connections, but as proposed, the development would be served by Town water and sanitary sewer with new connections to the main lines under Bidwell Street, which he discussed in detail. Electric and gas services will be installed off Bidwell Street. The storm water management system will include catch basins in the paved parking lot which will be connected by a subsurface piping network, discharged to the underground retention system.

Ms. Potocki asked whether the application has 3D renderings of the proposed buildings, actual photo simulations or renderings. Mr. Kuppuraj responded that he did not have 3D renderings at this time. He commented that visual simulations were not part of the requirements.

Ms. Potocki asked what the height of the townhomes would be, from the peak to the ground surface. Mr. Kuppuraj explained that there are two stories; the first floor is 9 ft. and the second floor is 8 ft. With the roof, 25 ft. would be the maximum.

Ms. Potocki inquired about the view for the abutters looking toward the proposed townhome development. Mr. Kuppuraj noted that the neighboring buildings are also two-story and assumed the proposed townhomes would be at the same level.

Mr. Kennedy noted that Staff commented about an issue with the driveways and sought more information.

Mr. Michael Kwok, Project Engineer with Freeman Companies, LLC, introduced himself. He stated that the first traffic question was related to sight distance, which is shown on the plans. The second comment was to justify the width of the curb opening of 30 ft. Engineering provided a comment that the curb radius had to be 25 ft., so to satisfy that comment, they will make the curb width bigger.

Mr. Kennedy asked Ms. Pilla whether that was addressed in the reference to her memorandum in the drafted motion. Ms. Pilla confirmed that the two comments are in the motion. If the

Commission includes reference to that memo in the motion, it is assured that Engineering will speak to the applicant's engineers to clear up the questions.

Mr. Schoeneberger requested a detailed confirmation on the height of the buildings. Mr. Kuppuraj detailed the height of each floor.

Mr. Prause noted that the zoning is currently Rural Residential. He asked how many units could fit on the property given the density allowance of the Rural Residential zone. Ms. Pilla replied that it would be two units total.

Mr. Prause asked about the density of the property to the north. Mr. Kuppuraj noted that they are within the allowed PRD zone density.

Mr. Prause commented that the Plan of Conservation and Development ensures that zoning is allowing units that are affordable at a reasonable density. Comparison with the sector is important because the intensity in one part of town is different than the appropriate intensity in other parts of town. It appears that there are 17 units in the property to the north on 1.6 acres, roughly the same density.

Mr. Prause asked whether there was a resolution after the last meeting about the second entrance. Ms. Pilla explained that the originally submitted plan did not include a connection to Wilfred Road. The Fire Marshal requested a better turnaround for fire trucks and emergency vehicles. In order to provide that, the applicant added an emergency-only access connection to the cul-de-sac at Wilfred Road. In response to that change, there were a couple of follow-up comments from Engineering about the location of the water line under the road. The new configuration with the pavement for the fire truck to turn around was the result of that conversation.

Ms. Potocki asked the applicant whether, when designing the property for multi-residence, the applicant was considering having parking on the periphery of the property with the buildings clustered toward the center. A conversation ensued about the configuration. Mr. Kuppuraj stated that several designs were considered, and this design was the most optimal and least disruptive for the neighbors.

Mr. Kwok explained that it is a very tight site and a driveway around the perimeter is not workable.

Ms. Potocki requested clarification.

Mr. Kuppuraj reiterated that they must meet open space requirements, the sidewalks, the walking path, and the road.

Mr. Sean McGann, 34 Bidwell Street, introduced himself. He reminded the Commission about the history of his property. In addition, he expressed his overall displeasure with the plan and the loss of the history.

Ms. Claudette LaChance, Bidwell Units, #816, Hartford Road, introduced herself. Ms. LaChance asked several questions and expressed her disapproval. She suggested building fewer units to lessen the noise and traffic.

Mr. Kuppuraj confirmed that these will be market-priced rental units.

Mr. Prause asked for confirmation that these are not intended to be low-income housing units, which Mr. Kuppuraj confirmed.

MOTION: Mr. Kennedy moved to close the public hearing. Mr. Schoeneberger seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:35 PM.

I certify these minutes were adopted on the following date:

March 6, 2023
Date

Eric Prause, Chairman

NOTICE: A DIGITAL RECORDING OF THIS PUBIC HEARING CAN BE HEARD IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.