

Meeting Minutes - Amended

June 20, 2024/ 5:30 PM / City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present: Jim Hunter, Jim Swatsenbarg, Matt Smith, Bill Barksdale, & Josh Anderson

Members Absent: Robin Harrison

Staff & Council: Traci Cox, Julie Tilley, & Terri Heckmaster

Staff Absent: Zeb Carney

Attendance: there was likely 75 to 100 people in attendance in the gallery

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Jim Hunter, Chairman

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion by Bill Barksdale to approve the previous meeting minutes, seconded by Matt Smith - All present voted in favor, minutes were approved

First Order of Business

- Bill Barksdale made a motion to restructure the agenda and move New Business item number one (1) to the beginning of the meeting before the Public Hearings in order to have the site discussion before the rezoning discussion which was to take place during the public hearing. This was seconded by Matt Smith - All present voted in favor, motion carried.

New Business

1. Revised : *Discuss a Preliminary Site Design for a 7.41 acre lot located west of River St. between Wendy Lane and Gene Taylor Drive.*
 - Tina Hallmark, Developer - first spoke about the plans to develop the vacant lot on River into Luxury Townhouses.
 - Ms. Hallmark stated that there had been a lot of misinformation going around and that the new development will certainly not be apartments (like a number of people in the area believe) but will actually be Townhouses and these will be sold to individuals and not rented.
 - The plan is to have a mix of 3 & 4 bedroom 2 ½ bath townhouses w/ some attached and some detached garages.
 - There will be a new street developed off of River Street to get access to the entire development
 - The development will happen in several phases

- There will be no duplexes or apartments
- Jeff Hallmark, Developer - also spoke about the plans for the new development and site design and noted that their intent is similar to that of The Villages at Rollins Creek.
 - There will be a total of 60 townhouses in the development
 - There will be no HOA, all the townhouses will be sold individually
 - The townhouses will be 2 Story
 - The selling price for the townhouses will be between \$260,000 - \$350,000
 - Square footage will be between 1,450 & 2,000 square feet
- Josh Anderson asked if there were any other lots zoned 'C' Apartments in there area and there are lots just to the north and a large number of lots about three blocks west and south of this lot that are zoned 'C' & 'E' General Business
- It was also noted that about half the properties surrounding this one are zoned 'B' Second Dwelling and could be developed into duplexes.

Staff Reports

- n/a

Public Hearing

1. *To Consider a Rezoning Request for a 7.41 acre lot located west of River St. between Wendy Lane and Gene Taylor Drive from 'A' First Dwelling to 'C' Apartment.*
 - There was a large crowd to speak against the rezoning request and development of the townhouses (which most believed to be apartments)
- Bob Miller; 2220 Rebekah St. - talked about a petition that he had taken around to every person in the neighborhood regarding the rezoning and how terrible it would be for the community.
 - He stated 85 residents signed the petition.
 - He also discussed that he believed the entire project was financially motivated.
 - He noted that all the houses in the surrounding area are only singles story and two story townhouses would look out of place
 - He was very worried about the current property values once the townhouses are built
- The general public had a number of comments and concerns that were just shouted from the gallery, a list of their concerns is as follows:
 1. Current property values will decrease if this development is built
 2. The owners will decide not to sell them and rent instead

3. The traffic on River will be terrible as it is already incredibly unsafe
 4. People were worried about if one person comes along and buys all the townhouses and makes them into apartments, then what?!?
 5. People are worried about where the new residents who buy the townhouses will park; if not in the garage then on the streets and that is dangerous
 6. People were worried about the development not being well maintained and falling into disrepair
 7. There is not enough police
 8. Crime rates will skyrocket
 9. Why don't the developer go buy a different vacant lot in town (people claimed there were tons of them)
 10. The general public had concerns about the type of people that might buy a townhouse
- The concerns listed above were mentioned over and over again by the general public throughout the meeting.
 - Jeff Meredith, Carthage Economic Development Corporation; spoke in favor of the development and stated that it is inline with the city's future plans. He also noted that he believes in zoning group 'A' (which many of the surrounding homes are in) it is allowable to build up to 3 stories.
 - Josh Anderson asked how it would work if the rezoning was recommended and moved forward to city council with the caveat that the development must move forward as stated on the plans and not be converted to apartments.
 - Jim Hunter noted that this was a possibility according to Zeb and that it was something that would likely need to be written into the zoning ordinance.
 - Jim Swatsenbarg discussed the possibility of making a totally new zoning ordinance for townhouses or at minimum making a sub-category for them.
 - This would need to be an agenda item and discussed in the future
 - Jim Swatsenbarg also mentioned that this type of development seemed like a great idea and provided some much needed affordable housing for the community
 - Josh Anderson asked how many lots the property could be platted for if it was turned into single family homes - The total number is 45 individual houses

- Jim Hunter talked about the future of the site and how development will eventually happen there, it likely wouldn't stay a large vacant parcel forever. He also noted that for the city to continue to grow in a positive manner these kinds of developments are important.
- Jim Hunter & Traci Cox noted that if passed the zoning request will go to two public readings with city council but the public will not have a chance to speak specifically regarding the rezoning, they would however speak during the public comments section.
- It was noted that this kind of development is becoming very popular in Northwest Arkansas and other fast growing areas.
- Bill Barksdale made a motion to deny the rezoning request, seconded by Matt Smith; 3 Ayes - Bill Barksdale, Matt Smith, & Jim Hunter; 2 Nays - Jim Swatsenbarg & Josh Anderson
 - The motion carried - the rezoning request was denied.

New Business

2. Discuss meeting dates for the commission

- There was general discussion amongst the commission regarding the date of the meetings. It was determined by general consensus to move the meeting date to the first Thursday of each month.
- The commission members also discussed reviewing/making rules and regulations for speakers from the general public during P,Z, & HP public hearings and discussions of new business.
 - This will be added to the July agenda
- The commission discussed the creation of a new zoning ordinance for townhouses.
 - This will also be added to the July agenda for discussion
- There was discussion regarding this year's required CLG training. The consensus was to do it independently and report back on which training everyone did. This will need to be listed on the annual CLG Report in September.
 - Josh Anderson will send everyone on the commission a list of training opportunities

Old Business

- Josh Anderson mentioned that PZ&HP had received a grant a while back and it had gone unused and the time frame to use the money was approaching . The grant was written when Abi Almandinger was the chairman of P&Z.
 - Traci Cox and Terri Heckmaster are going to investigate this further

- Josh Anderson will check with SHPO to see what they have regarding the grant and get the information for the states grant portal

Bill Barksdale handed in his resignation letter and it was accepted by chairman Jim Hunter. The commission wishes Bill all the best on his future endeavors and more time to relax!

Jim Swatsenbarg made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Josh Anderson, all present voted in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 7:29pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 18th 2024 at 5:30pm in the City Council Chambers