



**Meeting Minutes
Beloit City Plan Commission
Wednesday, December 5, 2018 at 7:00 PM
The Forum
Beloit City Hall
100 State Street, Beloit**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm. Commissioners Haynes, Weeden, Johnson, Faragher, Ruster, Finnegan, Robson, and City Councilor Prueschl were present.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the November 20, 2018 Meeting

Commissioner Haynes moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Robson seconded the motion. The motion passed, voice vote.

3. Consideration of an amendment to the Future Land Use Map of the City's Comprehensive Plan from Two-family/Townhouse Residential to Mixed Residential for the property located at 2426 Prairie Avenue

Community Development Director, Julie Christensen, presented the staff report and recommendation for denial.

Chairman Faragher opened the public hearing.

Andrew Sarris, 4201 Greenwood, Skokie, IL, indicated that he originally purchased this property about a year ago, and the intention was to develop the property with duplexes, townhomes, or condominiums. He is from Chicago, and his plan was to construct the units, and then sell them. In order to develop them, he will need to put in a street, and the infrastructure costs are just too high. He asked if the City could pay for the street, and Drew Pennington had indicated that the City was not willing to pay for the street.

He mentioned that he only listed the property for sale to see what people thought the property should be used for, and the responses he received were as a church, a variety of commercial uses, or apartments. He said that he didn't think that this was a commercial site, that the most common response was for apartments. He indicated that apartment rental seemed to be the preferred option for the site. Then, they ran the numbers, and the numbers worked for the apartment rental option. When they did their analysis, 48 units seemed to be the magic number of units.

Then, they started to look around the City to see what kind of design they liked. They really liked the Hawk Ridge Development, so they started to model their design around this development. The proposal is for 24 unit buildings with underground parking that is partially above ground. He would have the property set back further from Prairie Avenue with small berms in front, so that when you drove by, you would hardly notice they were there. They would construct two 24-unit buildings, one on Virginia and one on Prairie Avenue. They would leave the existing buildings; the armory building would be for their office and to be rented out for events. The other buildings would be for maintenance and maybe indoor tennis courts. They would only be using about one-third of the land for development which would leave plenty of open space. They went with 48 units because that would allow them to have a full-time custodian on-site. If they have fewer units, it just doesn't allow for that.

Mr. Sarris said that when they looked at the standard for the R-2 zoning, it is about 12 units per acre, which would allow up to 42 units. Therefore, he indicated that this was only a slight increase to go to 48 units. He indicated that he didn't want to be rezoned multi-family and would be applying for the PUD zoning. He said that Beloit wants to add residents, and this will add residents. Houses aren't selling in Beloit. The new developments where houses are selling aren't making much profit. He indicated that he didn't want to come in and put in \$3 million and walk away with just \$100,000 in profit. He has the intention of keeping the development in his portfolio and maintaining it, and he needs 48 units to make it work. If the City would be willing to put the street in, then he would be willing to put in the duplex/townhomes allowed under the City's Comprehensive Plan. He said that he was expecting resistance from the neighbors, but it doesn't seem like there is anyone opposing the development.

Commissioner Robson asked Mr. Sarris how much they anticipate the rent would be. Mr. Sarris stated that cost of rent would be \$900-1,200 a month. There would be a two bedroom, two bathroom units, one and half parking spaces per unit underground, animals with an extra fee, and laundry in the unit. They are hoping to get more than that, with the add-ons. Their research indicated that people are renting for \$1,200-1,400/month with a garage, and this development would have indoor parking.

Commissioner Robson asked what other apartment complexes Mr. Sarris owned, and Mr. Sarris stated he has mostly built commercial buildings including medical offices, condos, and townhomes. He said that he has done 6-8 unit townhomes. She interjected explaining that she is trying to understand his background. Ms. Robson explained that we have many landlords from out-of-town who don't maintain their rental units. Mr. Sarris explained that he usually does really high-end stuff. The construction costs in Beloit are much more reasonable than Chicago. Commissioner Robson again asked for names of the developments he had constructed. Mr. Sarris responded that it was mostly commercial. He said that he builds them and then sells them.

Commissioner Robson expressed concern about approving his development as proposed and then he could come back later, add more buildings, and then sell it. Mr. Sarris indicated that he is planning to keep the development. Ms. Christensen clarified that if the Comprehensive Plan Amendment was approved, he would be applying for a Planned Unit Development. This process would allow for Plan Commission and City Council to approve a Master Land Use Plan, and the number of buildings could be limited. He would then only be allowed to construct what was on the plan. Plan Commission could propose conditions of approval.

Commissioner Johnson clarified that the hand-out which shows the duplexes could only be developed if the City paid the infrastructure costs. Mr. Sarris confirmed that that was correct. Commissioner Johnson asked Ms. Christensen how many units are allowed under the R-2, Two-family Zoning. Ms. Christensen answered that it would be four to 10 units per acre.

Mr. Sarris explained that this development works here. It is on Prairie Avenue, close to the hospital, schools, and commercial. Additionally, the development is not that dense.

Chairman Faragher closed the public hearing.

Ms. Christensen outlined the public noticing rules related to Comprehensive Plan amendments. Mr. Sarris indicated that the residents were not in attendance, so they must not have issue with it. However, the rules for Comprehensive Plan Amendments do not require individual notification to residents. Therefore, we cannot be certain how they would feel about this proposed development. When the applicant applies for the rezoning, then the neighbors would be noticed. Commissioner Johnson noted that the residents would have an opportunity to be heard at that time. Ms. Christensen explained that the approval of a plan amendment would not automatically grant the zoning. He would still have to apply for the zoning and go through the public process.

Councilor Prueschl asked about the process for the approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment and the zoning. He asked if the amendment was approved and the development did not move forward as he has proposed, would a new developer have to go through the Comprehensive Plan Amendment step. Ms. Christensen answered that another developer would not have to go through the process again, if it was approved. However, they would still have to go through the zoning step. If the Comprehensive Plan amendment is approved, a new developer could apply for the R-3 zoning rather than the PUD, and it would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Weeden asked Mr. Sarris if he could come up with a different development to fit the Comprehensive Plan if he had more time to come up with different options. Mr. Sarris stated that he is open to any recommendations the Plan Commission might have.

Commissioner Finnegan didn't think it made sense to have all of the open space that just has to be mowed. He indicated that Mr. Sarris will get his money back on the one acre he developed, and he will want to replicate it on the remaining two acres. The concern is what impact this will have on the existing single family neighbors. Mr. Finnegan suggested mixing townhouses in with the multi-family development. Mr. Sarris responded that the access drive for the townhouses would need a turnaround which could accommodate fire trucks. That drive will take up a lot of land which makes the townhouses next to the single family neighborhood denser, and he would have to maintain the road. This option would also make it more difficult to sell the townhomes because he would have to tell buyers that they would have to pay to maintain the private drive. Mr. Sarris said that the numbers just don't work if he has to construct the access drive. He explained that he would be willing to do that type of development if the City will construct the street. He said that is why the PUD is the best solution for this site.

Commissioner Johnson mentioned that the zoning step will be highly controversial. The proposed plan will need to be a detailed plan with neighbor support. Commissioner Johnson indicated that he thought the plan should be redesigned, but that he agreed with the multi-family residential land use designation.

Andrew Sarris explained that in order for the development to have on-site management, he would need 48 units, but if he didn't provide on-site management, he could develop 36-38 units. However, he did not think it made sense to have a development without on-site management.

Commissioner Finnegan made a motion for approval, seconded by Commissioner Johnson.

Commissioner Johnson discussed how they could approve the amendment allowing multifamily buildings, and letting the PUD process play out and letting the neighbors come to the next meeting. He indicated that if we leave the property with the two-family/townhouse designation, he feels it will never develop.

Commissioner Finnegan indicated that we didn't look at numbers when we came up with the two-family/townhouse designation. Julie Christensen explained that the process for determining the appropriate land use on the Future Land Use Map is based on a variety of factors, such as adjacent land uses and type of street (arterial, collector, residential). We generally don't put multi-family residential next to single family residential, and we don't base the decision on whether a developer can make money by developing the site. Commissioner Finnegan responded that he thought we could put multi-family on Prairie, then two-family behind it, which would then back onto the single family neighborhood.

Commissioner Haynes indicated that a buffer is needed between the multi-family residential and the single family neighborhood. He also indicated that two-family doesn't work economically on the site, but that the plan as submitted will never be supported by

the neighborhood. Commissioner Finnegan commented that we have to give them the opportunity to try to develop the site.

Commissioner Robson said that we don't have the Planned Unit Development before us tonight with the berm and a buffer. She said that what we have is an established neighborhood of single family. It would be nice to have something like Plum Tree Village, but that is not what is before the Commission tonight. We have a Comprehensive Plan that was recently approved, and we are being asked to amend it.

Commissioner Haynes indicated that if we deny this request, this land may remain undeveloped forever. He indicated that he wasn't comfortable with the townhouse proposal when it was brought before the Steering Committee and the Plan Commission earlier. He indicated that the best idea might be to let this play out and see where it goes.

Commissioners discussed the different options, and several commissioners felt like it was worth approving to give the developer the option to see what he could do with the property under the multi-family residential designation.

Commissioner Robson asked why staff recommended denial. Ms. Christensen stated her concerns with having multi-family residential property be located immediately adjacent to a single family neighborhood. This is an established neighborhood, where the houses were located adjacent to an institutional use. She felt that we need to transition the uses from single family to multi-family. Commissioner Robson indicated support for the staff recommendation.

The motion passed, voice vote (4-3).

4. Status Report on Prior Plan Commission Items

Julie Christensen stated that the City Council approved the exception for the Bryden Motor's building, and they held the first reading for the annexation petition on Froebel Drive. City Council also approved the 20 foot electric ground easement.

5. Adjournment

Commissioner Robson moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Ruster seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Amber DesRoberts.