



Village of River Hills
7650 N Pheasant Ln
River Hills, WI 53217

Village Hall: 352-8213
Public Works: 352-0080
Police: 247-2302

PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES

Monday, November 9, 2020 @ 4:00 pm

This meeting was a virtual meeting through GotoMeeting – Meeting code 598-346-3412

1. Roll Call.

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. The following members were present: Peter Stanford, Jeffrey Costakos, Michael Weiss, Charles Stewart, Village Engineer Mustafa Emir, Chairman & Village President Steve Anderson, and Trustee Willard Walker. Absent and excused: Bernie Cohen and Don Daugherty. Also present: Village Attorney Bill Dineen, Bob Boucher, Peter Thornquist, Alan Marcuvitz, Carolyn Esswein, Village Manager Tammy LaBorde, and Village Deputy Clerk Stephanie Waala.

2. Approval of minutes from September 29, 2020

Motion by Weiss and seconded by Stewart to approve the September 29, 2020 minutes; motion carried unanimously.

3. Consideration and review of requests regarding the former Eder Farm property, five parcels located on the north side of Brown Deer Road running north to West Green Brook Road totaling 53.4 acres:

President Anderson stated there are two (2) presentations this afternoon. This is a listening session for the Plan Commission to determine what development to pursue that is in the best interest for the Village. No decisions or action will be taken at this meeting. These are not the only possibilities and other concepts may be discussed in the future.

a. Committee on the Environment's Request to create a Park as referred to the Plan Commission by the Village Board

Peter Thornquist spoke on this issue and presented a slide show. The COE is looking at what can be done to preserve this jewel. Their thoughts have evolved over several weeks. They are interested in a conservation area which would restore vegetation and the forest that was there. This includes the mouth of Fish Creek. They are not suggesting a park. He presented information on several conservation areas in the vicinity. The Eder farm contains a number of wetlands. Potential to restore the original forest. MMSD is aware of controlling water with their program Green Seams. They could be a partner in restoring this area. With funding, they could restore the natural area, the forest, maintain the wetlands and some prairie. They wanted to share this vision with everyone. They would go to Private donors, River Hills Foundation, Milwaukee Audubon, Fairy Chasm State Natural Area, Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy, MMSD, and started application process

for Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program which could pay for ½ of the cost of the land. Bob Boucher stated the Village put a letter in requesting a letter of retroactivity from the DNR for the Knowles-Nelson program. It does expire at end of 2021 and May 1, 2021 is the deadline. Competitive process and gives out \$6 million for municipalities. It is a political process and goes through Joint Finance Committee. There can be other partners who apply for funds also. Turn into a natural history park which is what it looked like at pre-settlement. The cost would be approximately \$250,000 to \$500,000 if putting ponds or enhance wetlands or plant trees. Also need to have upkeep in the first five years. The Green Seams program is an acquisition program where MMSD retains water upstream. Their goal is to acquire an additional 10,000 acres. River Hills is a wealthy community and could have naming rights or a benefactor to name the park. In Lake Forest, IL, they assessed the community over a few years for the park. There is also a chance that some of the land could be developed – residential homes within the boundaries. Strong sentiment that high density housing was not wanted by the residents with Mandel’s proposal. Unique opportunity and would like to see the Village pursue a vision of a natural area for the Village. The Village does not have anything contained within the Village.

Wendy Walcott, 8365 N. Pelican Lane – She likes the more natural vision. Doing nothing is not an option. She is thinking development for conservation. Try to think of alternatives.

Mike Kuehnl, 7855 N. Range Line Rd – Wanted to know if the park was the only alternative they are looking at. Most River Hills parcels have a park on their lot. Redundant to put another park in the community. Can we put in 5 acre lots on the land? President Anderson stated that with the five-acre question there is a concern that people who invest in five-acre would find it attractive in a different location. The second speaker will discuss condos. Mr. Kuehnl asked if there was a timeframe for the decision – President Anderson stated there is no timeframe as he didn’t want to limit discussion but should be something realistic – three to six months or less. Mr. Kuehnl asked how much use the property would get? Boucher stated that it would be unique and different from what you see in someone’s yard. It would be more reflective of woods.

Glen & Claire Hackmann, 7490 N. River Rd – Also chairs the RH Foundation. It is not a significant source of funds for this project. They would prefer a conservancy or a park and do not like the idea of an additional development. Possibly tie this into the sculpture garden.

Richard Stone, 1965 W. Fairy Chasm Rd – Missed half the meeting not sure how many others missed. Would like to see the residents polled to find out what they want. President Anderson hoped to start that today with this discussion. LaBorde noted the recording would be on the Village website.

Larry Boyer, 9365 N. Pheasant Ln - The natural conservation area appropriate for River Hills. This would be a unique natural area. The slides of flooding were after 3 to 4 hours of rain. Adding development would exacerbate the conditions he sees at his house every spring. This would be a way to handle water better than we do now.

Amy Barry and Mark Dellonte, 1740 W. Green Brook Rd – The design showed a community space – is that just parking or something else. Boucher stated that it was more of a concept for discussion. Barry stated it was a good strategy. This could bring a sense of community and gathering place. It would be a big add to the community. They would prefer to have public water but there is a need to manage the flooding and well water risk to their area would be appreciated.

Mike Kuehnl – If this is opened up as a conservancy is it open to the general public? Thornquist stated that yes it would be open to everyone. This would be educational in that they are trying to recreate the forest that was previously there.

John Machulak, 1400 W. Good Hope Rd - likes the conservancy idea.

Wendy Walcott – conservancies can be designed in many different ways. They are not planning to provide any facilities. Not something that would be maintained. Provides a place for the birds and wildlife to exist. Conservation easements can be funded in many different ways.

b. Planned Single Family Condominium Development

President Anderson introduced Carolyn Esswein who has helped put together a plan for the TID. She is a certified planner, has been in practice for over twenty-five years and has worked with a number of communities and has experience in balancing development with preservation. She began her presentation stating that she was asked to explore options for the site and has put together several slides. There were concerns based on the previous development proposals; concerns on building height, number of units, density levels and traffic access and impact into the neighborhood and the impact on the environment.

The considerations were limited site access, density – how could that be reduced, unique housing types – where to go if you decide to downsize and stay in the community, landscape buffers – for the development and the neighbors, site features, preserve wetlands on the site and enhanced natural features. This would be an option for residents to remain in the Village if they are looking to downsize. The development preserves the wetlands, creates a stormwater feature to address some of the flooding, walking trails for those who live there, one access off of Brown Deer Rd, landscape buffers around the entire site, and shared amenities in tennis courts, pickle ball courts, and community buildings.

A slide was presented that showed a development would be single-story single-family buildings with 2,000 sq.ft. living area with attached two-car garage and then several a little larger. One loop that moves around the site – and everyone has a view of a natural area, the shared pond or the wetlands. Lot of landscape along Green Brook Rd – 130 feet distance the road and another 40 feet to a building. The buildings are 400' from the Spruce Rd homes. This shows 91 total units, 79 units at 2,000 sq.ft. and 12 units at 2,500 sq.ft.

They were wondering who this could be marketed to. This layout preserves over half of the site – 68% is shared open space. Although it looks like a lot of roof tops there is a large percentage with shared open space. Other environmental strategies could be incorporated.

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This development provides a different type of housing that you don't have.

Debra Beck, 9078 N. Range Line Rd. – where would the water come from for the development? President Anderson stated that the intent is to bring water from the City of Mequon as there is a connection on County Line Road. Anyone along the water line would have the opportunity to hook up to municipal water.

Larry Boyer – 9365 N. Pheasant Ln – Why not select clustered housing that enhances the green space? Esswein stated the loop provides for Fire and EMS so there is no blockage. She placed the pond in the middle so that they would have a view. As you drive around you don't see all of the houses and she worked in the buffers and the wetlands.

Wendy Walcott – She understands that this is only one of many options. The blue pond is on the high point of the land. If it is to be developed, she would like to see it follow natural contours. Would like to see more trees. Doesn't understand why houses are separate. Esswein stated that more of a preference of single-family and individual ownership for the homes. Immediately south of the pond it slopes up. There would need to be some regrading but it is not at the highest point per the topography numbers she was given.

Bob Boucher – Who carries the burden of the cost to bring water into the Village? President Anderson stated that the goal is to have the developer pay for those costs. Alan Marcuvitz stated that all of the costs of the land and improving the land are borne by the developer. This is a concept plan and it can change – there is much work ahead. Getting people together to discuss may result in a development that more people will like.

Amy Barry – Fantastic design but too dense for this community. Could this be age restricted housing – who would monitor and can you put any restrictions on the owners as to renting out. Also concerned with parking lot lighting – would there be a lot of lighting? Would there be an HOA – how would we make sure it is maintained? Concerned with one ingress/egress is sufficient for safety. Esswein stated the developer will have an association and work through the age restrictions. They can restrict the lighting – usually no light can wash off the site or light up the sky. Density of 1.7 which is reduced from prior proposals but understands concern. When you have a loop it usually meets safety concerns but all plans would be reviewed by Fire & EMS. Marcuvitz stated that all the land would be in one – all private – private roads, roads & maintenance & snow plowing – private, could be set up as age restricted – HOA would put in place, the HOA bylaws would have to be consistent with Planning & Zoning and would address any rental issues, all documents would be subject to Village review and approval. The first responsibility here is to arrive at a plan for the property – all of that needs to evolve; when there is a final plan then all of these other questions can be answered.

Michael Weiss – Looking at the plan are these tennis courts? Esswein stated that yes tennis courts and pickle ball courts. He also asked about the house on Brown Deer Road – it is not part of the development. He asked about a common building. She stated there are two on the plan – places to gather or locker rooms. He asked about the walking path.

She stated that the path hugs along the road and could be a different material. She didn't want people walking in the road. It is an extended shoulder area.

He asked about the building shapes. Is the idea that all the garages face the street? She stated on the courts they would face the street as well as visitor parking in the median areas. She was trying to maximize the views from the units. He asked about the driveways and what the length was? She stated that they are 18 to 20 feet, enough space to park a car on the apron of the garage. He asked about visitor parking spaces. She stated there are 10 to 12 parking spaces depending on the size of the court. He asked how wide the loop road is? She stated the loop is 20 feet wide and it is two-way traffic. The court loops are 10 feet wide and 10 feet wide. This would not be curb and gutter. He asked about the architecture. She stated that she hoped there would be variety but that is for future discussion so that it feels more like a neighborhood. She laid out the plan to see how much could fit. She has worked with some developments where they limit the color palette. He asked if the plan is in conformance with the financial aspects of the TID. Marcuvitz stated the sample plan had to make assumptions, but until a final plan is reached there is no final cost. There is no point of a final fiscal plan until there is a final concept for what the property would be used for. The numbers that are in the TID plan are generally in keeping with this plan. He hopes that in the next few months the Village will develop a final plan. Then Ehlers would develop a final fiscal plan.

He would like to understand the math for what it takes to create a conservancy and then thinking about ongoing maintenance. Could there be a rough estimate that would show the related costs. Boucher stated that he could pull something together.

John Machulak – If the Village went in the TID direction, is there a contractor selected? President Anderson stated we have to decide what we want first. The Village would not act as the developer. Machulak asked if there is any handicap or timetable to put development on hold to see if funding could come in for the conservancy? Are we missing any deadlines if the TID is put on hold? Boucher stated the application deadline is May 1st and then another 30 to 60 days for processing before we would know if we qualify for funds.

LaBorde stated that the Village did borrow the funds - \$2.8 million, the first few years of interest are covered but at some time the funds need to be repaid.

Michael Weiss – What would a hybrid look like? What if the Plan Commission stated 27 acres conservancy and 27 acres of development? Thornquist stated that a smaller conservancy could be done. Esswein stated that you could do a hybrid and look at the areas you cannot develop and then look at the lands you can enhance. There are certain things that would determine where each of them would occur. President Anderson stated that a hybrid has merit and see how we can work it out. Esswein asked if the conservancy was public or part of the development. Walcott stated that the private homes if extended into the conservancy, that they can get a tax break and would not be open to the general public. There are many ways to combine natural areas with homes and they don't have to be open to the public. Thornquist and Boucher stated that they were envisioning public access. Esswein stated that there are many combinations. There are a number of questions that have to be addressed by the Plan Commission in order to determine hybrid.

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What type of development, is it public or private – wants to be responsive to be able to create new design. Weiss would like to see conservancy and 45 units.

Richard Stone – How does the Village plan to poll the residents? President Anderson stated that we have done surveys in the past. We don't have a plan yet. Dineen stated that the Village Board would have to formulate possible survey questions, or the PC could ask for a survey of the residents. A referendum is costly and time consuming to do so, but that is something to be determined by the Village Board or Plan Commission. Questions would have to be formulated. Conducting public hearings is also a way to find out what residents want. How would you phrase the questions?

A group will get together and discuss the possibilities prior to the next meeting.

4. Next meeting date – December 7, 2020 – 4:00 p.m.

5. Adjourn

Motion by Weiss and seconded by Costakos to adjourn meeting at 5:51 p.m.; motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by Tammy LaBorde, Clerk and Stephanie Waala, Deputy Clerk, on November 13, 2020.