

## MINUTES OF THE CITY OF AMES PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

AMES, IOWA

MARCH 15, 2023

The Regular Meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Mike Clayton at 7:00 p.m. on March 15, 2023 in the Council Chambers at 515 Clark Avenue. Commission Members present were Mike Clayton, Julie Winter, Mike Sullivan, Jon Emery, Mike LaPietra, and Jim Blickensdorf.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** Moved by Emery, seconded by Sullivan, to approve the Agenda for the meeting of March 15, 2023.

Vote on Motion: 6-0, Motion passed

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 1, 2023 MEETING:** Moved by Winter, seconded by Emery, to approve the Minutes of the February 1, 2023 meeting.

Vote on Motion: 6-0, Motion passed

**PUBLIC FORUM:** Chairperson Clayton opened the public forum and closed it when no one came forward to speak.

### **PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PLANNED RESIDENCE DISTRICT AND THE PRELIMINARY PLAT FOR THE BLUFFS AT DANKBAR FARMS**

City Planner Julie Kruse presented the staff report and stated the request is to change a portion of the property that is zoned FS-RL to PRD; the area zoned Ag will remain as such. Ms. Kruse said there will be 105 residential lots consisting of 50 single-family detached homes on the north side along with the clubhouse and 55 larger single-family detached home lots on the southwest end.

Ms. Kruse gave an overview of the development stating the Scenic Valley subdivision is south of the property and will connect via Cartier Avenue and Everest Avenue will continue to the north to Cameron School Road. She said electric and water are outside of the City's territory and will be served by Midland Electric and Xenia Water; the City's agreement with Xenia Water stipulates that the infrastructure, water pressure, etc., will meet City standards. Ms. Kruse said there will be sidewalks on all sides of the roads and a small pocket park. Sewer connections through the FS-RM area and a road connecting to GW Carver through the Ag site will be done with future final plats and are conditions of approval for the Preliminary Plat. Turn lanes and intersection improvements will be installed along Cameron School Road and GW Carver. Ms. Kruse said the applicant has requested a sidewalk waiver request for a small stretch on Cameron School Road that is bordered by two county lots and there will be a slope and grading easement along the south lots, which is a condition for approval, to prevent residents from damaging the area and removing all of the trees. There will also be an easement on the west side along the loway Creek to protect and maintain the trees in that area.

Ms. Kruse stated the 50 lots on the north side that will be part of the PRD will be “zero-lot line” homes that are pushed up to one side of the lots with a 1.5 foot setback on one side and approximately an 8 foot setback on the other side. The south lots all exceed the minimum lot size for FS-RL and will have standard setbacks. Ms. Kruse added a condition on the Preliminary Plat is approval of the stormwater management plan prior to the item going to City Council.

Jon Emery asked if there would be a sidewalk easement on Cameron School Road for a potential future sidewalk. Ms. Kruse said there will not as staff does not foresee a sidewalk ever going in on that stretch. Michael Clayton asked if the County or City changed the area to a more urban section with an urban gutter in the future, would there still not be a sidewalk. Ms. Kruse said there would not.

Mr. Emery questioned the garages forward on the houses, as it was his understanding the City was going away from that design. Ms. Kruse said the garages are back behind the façade of the homes, however, a couple of the homes on the plan did show the garages forward. Mr. Emery asked about the overhang with a zero-lot line and Ms. Kruse said overhang has been addressed with the 1.5 foot setback which will prevent eaves from crossing property lines. Mr. Emery asked if there would be a street connection to Cameron School Road. Ms. Kruse said Erickson Avenue will be a new street that will connect and line up with Bella Woods Road. Ms. Kruse added there will be two speed tables installed on Everest Avenue to deter speeding. Mr. Emery asked about the commercial area in Outlot ZZ and Ms. Kruse said there is an amendment to Plan 2040 going to City Council to remove the commercial node which will be coming to the Commission in the near future.

Julie Winter stated she was pleased staff was doing the tree easement and asked who would be enforcing it and what the penalty would be. Ms. Kruse said staff is working with the developer and engineer about some type of marking or signage to make future owners aware of the easement. She said in the past, enforcement has been if something comes to the attention of staff, for example if someone removed trees and installed a shed, staff would maybe do some enforcement action, but there is not an annual check or counting of trees. Ms. Winter asked if it was brought to the attention of staff that the developer or private owner tore down trees that were protected, is there some sort of enforcement mechanism. Ms. Kruse said she will need to see what the easement language is, which will be finalized prior to going to Council.

Greg Broussard with Bolton & Menk at 1519 Baltimore Drive addressed the Commission. He stated he is the engineer on behalf of the applicant and wanted to clarify a few items. He said they are using the PRD to have a variety of lots including zero-lot line, traditional and large to be able to provide a variety of homes. They are requesting the sidewalk waiver because the area is not safe for pedestrians who would have to walk through ditches to access the sidewalk. If the area was changed to urban with curbs and gutters in the future, there is room in the right-of-way to build a sidewalk. Mr. Broussard said Outlots A and B will be the stormwater features which will be wet ponds working in series with each other. On the south end, there will be a storm water pond and the developer is looking to partner with the City to not only meet their needs, but to also help the City get nutrient reduction credits that are needed for the Waste Water Treatment Plant. The applicant had a Natural Resources study done to identify the trees and will try to protect as much old growth trees

as possible. Mr. Broussard added the easement will be similar to the way the Scenic Valley easement is written which essentially says Ash trees or dead trees can be removed; any other large tree removal would require approval from the City and its arborist prior to removal. He said they are considering ways of educating the homeowners and may do a flyer showing a map of the trees that explains what the rules are. Mr. Broussard added the PRD does allow for a garage to be in the front of the house.

Mr. Emery asked Ms. Kruse about the garage setbacks. Ms. Kruse confirmed that the PRD does allow for garages to be in the front. Mr. Emery said it was his understanding from Director Diekmann that the City wanted to have garages set back from the front of new homes and no longer wanted them out in front. Ms. Kruse said she was not able to speak to that as she was not familiar with that conversation. Mr. Broussard joined the discussion and said there will be six floorplans to choose from for the Domani homes and of those, there is only one floorplan that has the garage in front of the house.

Kurt Friedrich of Friedrich Companies, 100 6<sup>th</sup> Street, told the Commission they very excited to be moving forward with the project. He stated they purchased the two farms about eight years ago which were eventually annexed into the City. He said the entire Outlot ZZ area has been sold to The Lutheran Church of Hope who intends to make the site their ministry campus. Mr. Friedrich added City Council voted to eliminate the commercial node on the site at their meeting the night before. Mr. Friedrich said the development is a nice example of providing a lot of different types of housing, with a variety of lot types to meet different price points and family needs.

David Thielen of 3974 North Dakota Avenue stated he was representing the Thielen family who owns 20 acres abutting the proposed development and Scenic Valley. He said most of the 20 acres are in the floodplain, but there are 1.2 acres in the northeast corner that are not and could potentially be developed. Mr. Thielen stated his family is very protective of the land and have turned down offers to buy it, and he is concerned about the 1.2 acres being landlocked. Ms. Kruse said access to the northeast corner of their lot would have to be across the Thielen's adjoining lot, but she was unsure if the County would allow that through a floodway.

Jim Lovin of 4421 Everest Circle expressed concern about the additional traffic that will be using Barcelos Street to get to GW Carver. He stated that as it is now, getting on to Barcelos in the mornings to get out of the neighborhood is very busy and it will become very congested with the addition of 55 new homes in the area. Mr. Lovin suggested installing a speed bump or another way of slowing the speed down through the residential area because although the speed limit on GW Carver has been reduced to 45 mph, the majority of people exceed 45. Mr. Lovin also asked about the catch basins in the northwest corner of Scenic Valley where the water flows north and the catch basin in the new development where water seems to flow south and if there will be potential problems with the basin catching all the water from both subdivisions.

Mark Barton of 3634 Cameron School Road stated people speed all the time in front of his house on Cameron School Road. He said it is very dangerous and is not enforced at all. He asked if the City would be patrolling that street now that it is part of the City. Mr. Barton said he has notified the County numerous times about the speeding, but nothing has been done.

Ms. Kruse said the City usually has agreements with the County for maintenance and patrolling, but she did not know what that agreement says or who would be patrolling it. Mr. Barton reiterated what Mr. Lovin said about people speeding and completely ignoring the posted speed limit. He then asked if the catch basins get progressively lower in elevation and said the ponds in neighboring yards are subject to flooding.

Mr. Broussard addressed the storm water questions. He said there is a storm water basin in the northwest corner of Scenic Valley and the natural flow is northwest. The storm water from Scenic Valley will be captured and routed through the basin in the new subdivision. The storm water pond in Outlot B will be a wet pond and a storm sewer will connect it to another pond in Outlot A and about three quarters of the larger homes will flow naturally to Outlot F. He added that they are talking to the neighbors about the plan, and per the City's requirement, the developer will be reducing the water flow rate and restricting it as if the entire site was a prairie in good condition.

Pam Jones of 3634 Cameron School Road asked if the traffic will be reduced on Cameron School Road to accommodate the new outlets and how is the City addressing traffic control. Ms. Kruse said intersection improvements will include turn lanes and widening and there will be a traffic light at the intersection at Cameron School Road and GW Carver. There will also be another access connection from GW Carver to Everest Avenue.

Mr. Broussard discussed the traffic improvements. He stated the City of Ames hired a consultant to do a traffic study on the existing and proposed volumes in the area and the improvements being made are a result of the recommendations of that study. He said on Cameron School Road where Everest will tie in, there will be a dedicated left turn lane and ultimately a signal at the intersection. GW Carver will be widened to add a center turn lane and there are no planned improvements at this time on Erickson Avenue where it ties into Cameron School Road.

Ms. Jones asked for clarification about what is planned for the green area on the plan. Ms. Kruse said it is zoned FS-RM, but staff does not know what is planned for that area at this time as nothing has been proposed and added it may be single-family attached with less than 12 units per group. The master plan designates a density and unit count of 60-100, but staff will not know the exact number until they see the site plan.

Chairperson Clayton closed the public forum.

Ms. Kruse stated staff can look into the agreement between the City and County about who will be patrolling Cameron School Road prior to going to Council. She added the traffic concerns within Scenic Valley would need to be addressed with the Public Works Traffic Engineer since the development is already built.

Mr. Emery stated he empathized with the traffic concerns on Cameron School Road, but he explained that traffic flows are outside the scope of the Commission and issues would need to be brought to Council or the traffic engineer.

Moved by Winter, seconded by Sullivan, to recommend that the City Council approve the following requests for the property:

- A. Rezoning of the properties from Floating Suburban-Residential Low Density (FS-RL) to Planned Residence District (FS-PRD).
- B. Approval of the Major Site Development Plan, subject to the following conditions:
  - i. The clubhouse and pool are to begin construction as part of phase four. The clubhouse and pool must be completed prior to the construction of a home in the fifth phase, unless an extension is granted by the City Council.
  - ii. The pocket park will begin construction as part of phase four. The park and amenities must be completed prior to the construction of a home in the fifth phase, unless an extension is granted by the City Council.
  - iii. Details of amenities and layout of the pocket park will need to be reviewed and approved by the Planning Director prior to the Outlot B being Final Platted.
  - iv. Update of the Zoning Agreement to reflect change of zoning districts and maintain all requirements related to the master plan for uses and sanitary sewer capacity.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion Passed.

Moved by Winter, seconded by LaPietra, to recommend that the City Council approve the Preliminary Plat for the Bluffs at Dankbar Farms development located on the side of the southwest corner of George Washington Carver Avenue and Cameron School Road, contingent upon approval of the proposed PRD and

- a) Defer access connection from George Washington Carver Avenue and Everest Avenue requirement until the time Outlot ZZ is platted for development.
- b) Approve waiver of sidewalk requirements along Cameron School Road at the intersection of Erickson Avenue.
- c) Review of a specific layout plan for driveways, utilities, and street trees for each final plat.
- d) Finalize the conservation easement for slope and tree protection prior to final plat.
- e) Finalize traffic calming design and locations with final plat.
- f) Approval of storm water management plan prior to going to City Council.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion Passed.

**COMMISSION COMMENTS:**

Mr. Clayton asked if a new Commission member has been appointed. Ms. Kruse confirmed there is a new member who will start in April. Mr. Emery asked about the next meeting. Ms. Kruse said the next meeting will have the amendment to eliminate the commercial node that was discussed earlier.

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

None

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:** Moved by Emery to adjourn the meeting.  
The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.



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Mike Clayton, Chairperson  
Planning & Zoning Commission



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Eileen Carter, Recording Secretary  
Department of Planning & Housing