



Planning Commission Meeting Minutes for – February 24, 2016

Chair Laumbattus called the Meeting of February 24, 2016 to order at approximately 6 p.m.

Roll Call

Members Present: Commissioners Oppel, Laumbattus, Pollard, Cleland-McGrath and Farnsworth. Absent: Commissioner McNett

Minutes – No Minutes were presented

Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

New Business

Public Hearing: 48 North Preliminary Plat & PUD, PUD-2015-0003

Mr. Kevin Cricchio, Associate Planner, presented the 48 North Preliminary Plat and Planned Unit Development along with a few proposed code modifications, a right of way dedication to create 30 lots and one community park on the subject property which is 7.4 gross acres located in R2 zoning district. The proposed lots would range from 7,500 to 12,400 square feet. The project site is located on the south side of Oakes Avenue between Allen Court and Eagle View Court. The applicant is Nels Strandberg of 48 North on Fidalgo Island, LLC, Anacortes, Washington. Landowner is Richardson Revocable Living Trust located in West Hills, California and the project surveyor and engineer is Herrigstad Engineering and Surveying of Anacortes.

The proposed code modifications are as follows: lots 3 through 17, the front yard setback would be reduced from 20 feet to 10 feet for the house itself. The rear setback would be increased from 20 feet to 30 feet; however, the garage would still need to comply with the 20 foot front yard setback. All other lots would meet the underlying zoning district setback. Additionally, the applicant has requested a narrower right of way; typically the City would require a 50 foot right of way with curb, gutter and sidewalk on both sides. The applicant has requested a reduction to 40 feet with the sidewalk only on one side of the street.

The applicant has requested an increase to the underlying zoning district's lot coverage from 35 to 37.5 percent. The applicant has also requested a deviation to the 12 percent city standard for maximum road grade and proposes 15 percent at the entrance only to the subject plat and PUD. Lastly, the applicant has proposed a reduction from the speed limit in front of the subject parcel to be reduced from 40 miles per hour to 30 miles per hour.

The existing land use is vacant and unimproved and is heavily treed. To the north, the zone is Commercial Marine; to the south, R2; to the east, Aviation or AZ; and to the west, both R2 and Commercial Marine. To the north, south and west, the adjacent land uses are single family residential and to the east is the Port of Anacortes Airport. Minimum lot size is 7,500 square

feet per the R2 zone; the maximum permitted density in the R2 zone is 4 dwelling units per gross acre. The site consists of 7.20 net acres. The gross is 7.48 acres which includes half the abutting right of way. The density calculation provides for 29.92 dwelling units, which we round up to 30, and the applicant has proposed 30 with a community park.

Mr. Cricchio reviewed the tree preservation plan and a condition was included that the applicant plant additional trees to mitigate the loss of the required number of trees due to the project. The Transportation Plan was reviewed and it was determined that a turn lane on SR20 was not required. However, the applicant has proposed a left turn lane to improve the area.

Mr. Cricchio concluded with a recommendation of approval by the Planning Department for submittal to City Council.

Chair Laumbattus asked for clarification of the reduction in road-width in the conditions. Mr. Measamer provided that Steve Lange of the City Public Works/Engineering Dept. will address that but included new regulations for low impact development requirements will be implemented in the near future and the City is starting now to reduce the overall impervious area by reducing the width of that roadway down to 28 feet. The actual right of way would still be 40 feet which will allow for all the utilities, sidewalk and roadway.

Mr. Steve Lange, COA Public Works/Engineering Dept., reviewed the utilities installation, connections and roadway/pedestrian connectivity for this project.

Mr. Nels Strandberg, 408 2nd Street, Anacortes, project developer, proposed a 32 foot wide road but the City stated referred to these lower impact development regulations and asked if he would be okay with 28 feet, which works. Mr. Strandberg provided that the CC&R's for this development will not allow street parking on a routine basis so this should not be an issue. Mr. Strandberg discussed the 12 percent road grade which is okay. Steve Lange's comment regarding a French drain around the entire perimeter will take out every tree on the site, which is not necessary as the site is dry. Mr. Strandberg reviewed the location of the site and the landscape plan and discussed the trees that will be retained and removed and explained the setback configurations are to save trees. Mr. Strandberg met with the neighbors to the south in Whidbey Court and showed them the trees we are planning on retaining; we talked about which trees they would want to save and which ones they did not want to save. I proposed that I would plant a hedge or build a fence and I understood they want a 6 foot cedar fence. I propose I do that not only on the south line but the west line and then up against Eagle View Court as well. We are going to leave this open across the back to the airport; it feels nice just looking out at more space than viewing a fence.

Mr. Strandberg discussed the rain garden and presented design schematics. Mr. Strandberg discussed the reason for requesting a PUD including a reduction in the front yard setbacks to save trees. They are requesting a 40 foot right of way rather than a 50 foot right of way. Mr. Strandberg explained that they could easily put a 50 foot right of way in the entire plat, put 7,500 square foot lots and end up with 30 lots but that would exclude a buffer and a landscape area next to Oakes Avenue and no community park. The trade off from a 40 foot right of way is a community park and a 30 foot buffer. Mr. Strandberg included that if they did remove the community park and take the larger buffer, they would have 8,000 square foot lots which would

allow a little bigger homes so I am just requesting a little bit of a variance in the lot coverage which amounts to about 200 square feet per house on an 8000 square foot lot. Mr. Strandberg discussed the placement of new trees.

Commissioner Oppel asked about the grade change on the entrance and whether the street would have to be lowered to meet up with the new grade. Mr. Strandberg provided that in a perfect world you would get permission for a 15 percent road grade reduction and then you would work with the fire department because the fire department will allow me to do a 15 percent road grade they will just require me to sprinkler every house so that is a decision honestly that I would like to make. In a perfect world, I would like you to approve a 15 percent road grade or up to a 15 percent and then I would work with the fire department and if he wants to require sprinklers on every house because I decide to build it that way, I am willing to live with that. I would like that to be my choice but it doesn't have to be. If you are more comfortable with 12 percent, I can live with it. So we are going to be cutting into the bank and even at 15 percent right up to the community park, that is about a 4 foot grade change when we go to 12, it is a 7 foot grade change so it would be a retaining wall at the end of the road and then a park above it. So we will make that look as good as we can; it probably means moving a few thousand more yards of dirt. If I have my choice between sprinklers and doing that, I will probably reduce the road grade.

Commissioner Oppel asked about the road width situation and if Mr. Strandberg was comfortable with that. Mr. Strandberg stated he is comfortable with that and agrees with City staff and if that is the way development is going; I don't think every single circumstance deserves a 32 foot wide road. So we have a little loop; it is going to be a quiet little neighborhood; there isn't going to be a lot of fast moving through traffic, I think a narrow road is going to be just fine.

Commissioner Pollard asked Mr. Strandberg to make a comment to road width in regards to having sidewalk only on one side; is that part of the PUD request. Mr. Strandberg provided that a typical city street would require sidewalks on both sides. Mr. Lange pointed out that is fairly common to get approval with sidewalk on one side; I think it depends on where you are. We are proposing a sidewalk on the outside and then no sidewalk on the inside. We are kind of considering that a little bit of a tradeoff for the 300 feet of sidewalk we are installing along Oakes Avenue which is extremely expensive sidewalk because we are sitting there with flaggers and it is not cheap sidewalk so this is a sidewalk I would like to have to get down to that intersection so we can cross the road to get down to the trail like Mr. Lange had talked about. That is one of the reasons why I am not proposing sidewalk on the site just because I feel that expense is already being spent here. The other reason is just the room on the lots, I am trying to leave my lots a certain size – I wanted to leave them 7500 or great because that is the R2 zoning but I also wanted to have that little community park. I just love those little parks in San Juan Passage and I thought that is a spot looking over the road where they are going to have a great shot of the view and that is one of the reasons I want to save that space.

Commissioner Oppel asked does the setback reduction occur with lots 23 through 30 for the front yard or is that just for the outer lots. Mr. Strandberg stated we proposed it on lots 3 through 17 so those are the lots that we are proposing to retain trees and that have the most indirect impact on neighbors. I think one of the letters on file from the Stoltzes is they are pretty

close to their property line and we are trying to get as far away as possible. Commissioner Oppel asked that the setbacks on 23 through 30 would be a 20 foot front yard setback. Mr. Strandberg responded that whatever the zoning is for R2.

Commissioner Farnsworth asked whether a drain at the base of the hill along Oakes Avenue would alleviate some of the concerns that you have but not require Mr. Strandberg to install a drain around the property. Mr. Lange provided it will change once you open that side up; as far as the landscape goes the trees that he is trying to save, I didn't honestly didn't take a look at the trees that are being retained, the number one complaint that we get after these subdivisions go in is the water under the house and the drainage code allows it says to put perimeter drains around the subdivision to protect itself from uphill water. If he opens this side up and for some reason the subsurface water isn't getting onto the property, then it wouldn't be that big of a deal. I don't want to see those trees come down just to put a storm pipe in but there might be some other ways of doing that to protect the houses themselves and bypass it. Commissioner Farnsworth asked if there could be some information on whether a house is safer with fire sprinklers. Mr. Don Measamer, Director of Planning, Economic & Community Development, responded that in the future you may see that every residential unit will be required to have an automatic fire sprinkler system. The various building codes have required it now for about 6 years and the state building code council has waived that requirement. Getting back to what the Anacortes Fire Marshall has looked at and in my conversations with him on this project, if the street grade exceeds 12 percent, they would require each of the residential units to have an automatic fire sprinkler system. So that is why they are okay, I believe Mr. Strandberg said he is okay with going to that 12 percent. But if it did not meet that, it would have to go to fire sprinklers for each of the houses.

With no further questions from the Commissioners, Chair Laumbattus opened the public hearing.

Marilee Huffman, 806 Commercial Avenue, Anacortes. I was just going to ask about the trees that were going to be saved and also about the trees that were going to be planted. What are going to be the heights of those saved because especially along the airport side and how long will it take for the trees that are planted to grow. Can you plant a certain type of tree that is not necessarily going to grow to a certain height because you always want to think of safety around airports. Chair Laumbattus suggested that answers be provided at the end of the public comment portion. With no further comments from the public, Chair Laumbattus closed the public hearing.

Mr. Strandberg provided that he meet with Mr. Worra, the Executive Director of the Port, and they had no concerns over the trees being left. Mr. Strandberg did not know their actual height but some of them are probably 100-125 feet tall. They are outside of the area they are concerned about. They actually have some trees on their side of the fence that are pretty tall as well. I did have a plan to plant Douglas firs and western red cedars that get several hundred feet tall. Mr. Worra requested that we do a different variety that grow to about 30 feet tall.

Commissioner Oppel asked about the storm water, sewer, storm utilities horizontal alignment map and whether the perimeter drain was included in the drawings presented to the Commissioners and if this is the one for approval tonight. Mr. Lange stated that he does not

want the Commissioners to approve anything that may get changed on the civil side as far as utilities go. As far as the perimeter drain, he is not proposing that on this submittal. Chair Laumbattus stated that they did not see any wet spots during the site visit.

Chair Laumbattus stated the plan appears to be a nice little neighborhood and pretty well done. Commissioner Farnsworth stated that he would prefer sprinkler systems in the houses and is willing to throw in the 15 percent road grade as well but agrees with everything Chair Laumbattus just stated. Chair Laumbattus stated he does not prefer to change the Fire Marshall's decision without further discussion and called for further comments. Commissioner Cleland-McGrath stated that she does know Mr. Strandberg socially and has not discussed this project at all with the proponent. No comments were presented in regard to this statement. Commission Oppel stated he has a concern about a left turn pocket for anyone heading west from the project. Mr. Lange stated the intent will be to have a left hand turn out of that subdivision. Leaving the subdivision, you will be able to take a left or right. Commissioner Oppel says it appears that there is a barrier in the middle of the street so how does someone turn left when leaving the subdivision. Mr. Lange stated that DOT has not warranted a left turn movement for this project. Chair Laumbattus discussed a drawing that includes just hash marks and not a raised curb. Mr. Lange stated it is being proposed to be painted.

Commissioner Cleland-McGrath asked for clarification of the 40 foot right of way in the circular place and whether it will be the 28 or 32? Mr. Lange stated that it could be either but for egress, the City would prefer seeing a wider road through there but a 28 will function quite well.

Mr. Measamer clarified a few items including that the applicant originally proposed a deviation from the 12 percent grade to 15 percent and that the applicant has since withdrawn that request (see page 2 of staff report) and so the staff report will be revised indicating applicant withdrew that request so we are not approving that deviation. The next thing is that Mr. Strandberg provided you with a letter this evening wherein he proposed a height limitation for one of the lots in relationship to a conversation he had with one of the abutting property owners. Mr. Measamer read the proposal and recommended the Planning Commissioners consider adding this as a condition so that it is dealt with accordingly as proposed. Mr. Strandberg's proposal includes that the City require the proposed lot 15 adjacent to Stoltz be restricted to height at 25 foot from the highest point on the property northeast corner.

With no further discussion, Commission Oppel made a motion to approve the proposal with the deletion of the 15 percent entrance grade and the addition of the height restriction on lot 15 in addition to all other staff conditions approved. Commissioner Farnsworth seconded the motion; vote called for was unanimous in favor of the motion.

With no further business, Chair Laumbattus called the meeting to a close at approximately 7:10 p.m.