

APPROVED

Village of Riverwoods  
Plan Commission Meeting  
Meeting Minutes October 6, 2022

A meeting of the Village of Riverwoods Plan Commission was held on Thursday, October 6, 2022 at Village Hall. Chairperson Laurie Breitkopf called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Present:

Karl Blalock  
Laurie Breitkopf, Chairperson  
Sherry Graditor  
Stephen Levin

Absent:

Jay Datt  
Carey Rothbardt

Also Present:

Bruce Huvad, Village Attorney  
Kris Ford, Mayor  
Michael Clayton, Village Trustee  
Henry Hollander, Village Trustee

1. Visitors wishing to address the Plan Commission

There were no visitors wishing to address the Plan Commission.

2. Old Business

There was no Old Business.

3. New Business

Public Hearing for 3750 Deerfield Road (Federal Life property) on application of Lexington Homes L.L.C. to consider (i) zoning text amendments to Sections 9-4A-3 and 9-11-12 of the Village Code, (ii) rezoning the subject property to the 1-R 42,000 Square Foot (Exclusive Of Road Easements) Single-Family Residential District, and (iii) granting a special use permit for a Residential Planned Unit Development under Section 9-11 12 of the Village Code as amended, for a townhome development.

Discussion of possible text amendment to govern residential planned unit developments in the 1-R zoning district.

Mr. Huvad explained a property owner has the right to request a modification of their property and many properties have been rezoned in the Village after consideration through Public Hearings. The property owners at Federal Life no longer have use for the property and went to market. They are proposing a low-density multi-family development. In 2005, the Village adopted an affordable housing plan where a certain number of new units in the Village be affordable. The developers will present a portion of their plan tonight but the Public Hearing will be continued for at least one meeting.

The property at 3750 Deerfield Road is currently zoned O&R-1. The Meadowlake subdivision to the north is zoned R-1. The Village only has single-family homes while most municipalities have multi-family homes as well. Meadowlake is currently zoned to have multi-family homes. The site will allow approximately 58 units. Looking at the map, it would make sense to have the Federal Life property rezoned to 1-R.

The proposed project is being considered by the Plan Commission and will then be brought to the Board of Trustees. Staff believes the property should be zoned as 1-R and there should be a better mechanism for multi-family housing. Thorngate's zoning was increased through the use of a Planned Unit Development (PUD), which allows the Village to gain some public benefit such as stormwater management as well as architectural excellence. Lexington Homes is asking for a PUD with some zoning relief (1-R District), adjusting the standards and certain modifications to accomplish the site plan.

Tonight, the developers will discuss the site plan and architecture as well as an overview of how the rezoning makes sense. The stormwater management, affordable housing and technical discussions will take place at future meetings.

Lynn Dorfman, a 68-year resident, is concerned about the proposed project's drainage. She expressed concern about the possibility that Lexington Homes would attempt to put a pipe in Meadowlake's west lake for drainage. Mr. Huvad explained the drainage will not go to the lake in Meadowlake. Ms. Dorfman wants to ensure Lexington Homes has enough drainage on their own property.

Hal Francke, Attorney with Meltzer, Purtill & Steele LLC, explained the subject property has a net acreage of 8.85 acres and is surrounded by single family homes to the east, Meadowlake to the north, CubeSmart and Thorntons to the south and retail to the west. The proposed land use is consistent and compatible with the existing land uses, if properly constructed. Mr. Francke believes the request to rezone the property from O&R-1 to 1-R is appropriate. Another standard to consider is the Village's Comprehensive Plan. The current land use map has the zoning of the property as office campus, because the current use is office campus.

The Comprehensive Plan is a planning tool to lay out the goals and objectives of the community but is not an Ordinance. In October 2021, the Plan Commission considered a proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Plan which introduced a mixed-use overlay category to encourage consideration of office, business and residential uses,

including multi-family developments that work harmoniously to benefit the larger planning area. The mixed-use overlay would be appropriate for the Federal Life property.

The applicants are requesting proposed zoning of 1-R 42,000 single-family residential + residential PUD with a text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance making residential PUDs an additional authorized Special Use in the 1-R district, and an amendment to the text of Section 9-11-12 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow increases in residential density on a property where an applicant proposes to advance the Village's goal of creating affordable housing opportunities. The applicants are also requesting some departures from setbacks and buffers requirements and relief from the Woodland Ordinance:

- The permitted density would be 6.22 dwelling units per acre or 55 units. The proposed density would be 7.8 dwelling units per acre or 69 units.
- There could be a density bonus of up to 25.5 percent.
- The proposed east boundary driveway setbacks are 10 feet in lieu of the required 20 feet.
- The proposed building height is 35.3 feet instead of the permitted 35 feet.
- There would be 11 guest parking spaces.
- The proposed woodland removal is 58 percent in lieu of the permitted 25 percent maximum.

Nate Wynsma, Vice President of Acquisitions and Planning with Lexington Homes, explained they are the contract purchaser of the Federal Life property. The property needs updating. Lexington Homes wants the property to be a collaboration among Lexington, the Village, Lake County Division of Transportation (LCDOT), and the neighbors. The property was deemed as a location for stormwater management and compensatory storage by LCDOT. The Village wants to provide an access road from Deerfield Road to Colonial Court Shopping Center. The proposed design includes inward-facing, private courtyards and motor courts that allow the building architecture to be seen from Deerfield Road. Lexington proposes 69 townhomes with a minimum of a 2-car driveway in a cohesive development. Lexington would build the stormwater management system required by LCDOT's widening of Deerfield Road, so Lexington can control the timing of the development and continuity of the common areas. The stormwater management ponds would be designed as an amenity. The appearance and aesthetics on the site would be cohesive.

Tom Jasek, In-House Planner with Haeger Engineering, discussed the flood plain which includes the entire property other than the existing Federal Life building. There are no wetlands on the property, but there are wetlands to the north. The existing detention pond is not a wetland. Mr. Jasek explained there are significant areas dedicated to stormwater management and the Deerfield Road expansion takes additional land from the area. Lexington would also add an access road to Colonial Court. Mr. Jasek explained they have confronted these constraints to enhance the community. The drainage patterns cannot be altered.

Mr. Jasek explained the proposed motor courts are screened and private, to make vehicles less intrusive. They will have high-end pavers and courtyards to create a pleasant, semi-enclosed outdoor area.

Jeff Torrens, Senior Project Manager with Dickson Design Studio (landscape architects), explained the proposed landscaping will soften the area and provide screening. They propose monument signs off Deerfield Road, that will be lushly landscaped for visual appeal. Buildings 10, 11 and 12 will have berms and landscape screening to provide shade and seasonal interest. The motor court entries will be 18' wide and will be screened with 4' high fences and plantings. There will be landscaped areas around the buildings. There are pedestrian-oriented features throughout the site including walkways and benches. There will be vertical decorative features throughout the site to serve as entrance features to each building. This design will create a unified look and add character to the site.

Jeff Mulcrone, Director of Design with BSB Design, explained the streetscape will be outward facing. The motor courts will be inward facing. There will be varying buildings comprised of 5, 6 or 7 townhomes with 2 – 4 bedrooms each. The affordable housing units will blend in seamlessly. Mr. Huvard noted Lexington is suggesting 3 affordable units, but that is subject to Village approval. The building exterior includes high-quality materials, varying rooflines, bay windows, nice entry doors and various colors. The rear elevations have the garage motor court, masonry, outdoor living spaces, four-sided architecture and multiple windows. The unit depths and materials will vary to give character to the architecture.

Resident Mark Himmelstein asked how the light from the houses will be screened from Meadowlake. He asked what the target market for the homes will be as well as the height of the buildings. Mr. Himmelstein asked about the tax revenue from the project.

Mr. Wynsma explained the overall height is 35' and 28' to the eave. Lexington provided a lighting plan in its application. There will be carriage lights facing the ponds and garages that will meet the Village's photometric requirements. If street lights are proposed, they will be at the intersections. Lexington's greater concern is vehicular light pollution. They are screening the motor courts and north end of the entrances and exits. Mr. Wynsma noted the tax revenue numbers will be provided to the Board. The target market is a broad spectrum, including empty nesters and some families.

Resident Judy Haley believes this development would attract numerous families because of the quality of Deerfield schools, which is contradictory to the applicant's beliefs.

Resident Ricky Yaffe expressed concern about the aesthetics because the lot line is 50 feet from Meadowlake. If the zoning was not changed, there would be 58 units. He would prefer a compromise that would remove one unit from each building to allow more land between this property and Meadowlake's west lake.

Resident Peter Koblinski expressed concern about removing trees that currently serve as a buffer. He would also prefer the fence be higher because of the lake and potential loss of privacy.

Resident Christy Sherman would like to see the existing building footprint and the proposed footprint. She noted the reduction of the woodlands is problematic due to the wildlife. The trees are needed to provide winter coverage. Ms. Sherman is unsure whether the Special Use standard of design excellence has been achieved. She questioned whether there would be enough guest parking available.

Resident Mathew Eisenstein expressed concern about potential decline of plantings and fencing. He asked how the planting and fencing will be maintained. Mr. Huvard explained the Village has asked for native landscaping to be planted, which is not always easily maintained. The Village ecologist will be consulted. The Village will try to incorporate landscape maintenance agreements as well. Mr. Francke explained the Village could add maintenance and replacement requirements to the Special Use Ordinance. The development will have a recorded declaration which is subject to review by the Village Attorney, so the Village will have multiple tools and ways to address these issues.

Resident Art Gordon believes one way to stop the problem of woodland removal is to reduce building density and not encroach to the north, which would not require the removal of as many trees. The Village is a Tree City USA and needs to ensure plant diversity is maintained. People move to Riverwoods because of plant diversity and woodland and plant life preservation. Mr. Francke explained the reduced side yard is to the east, not the north.

Resident Lila McClelland asked if a lot line marker can be placed. Mr. Wynsma asked if there is a specific area that could be marked. Ms. McClelland noted there is a lot of wildlife in the woodland as well.

Resident Christina Averbuch explained people in Meadowlake enjoy the woods and nature, which will be removed. There will be approximately 250 residents and only 11 guest parking spots in the proposed development. She expressed concern about guests parking at the Shoppes of Riverwoods and on the streets of Meadowlake. Ms. Averbuch noted there is no place for children to ride their bicycles, no playgrounds and the homes are very close together. She expressed concern about only having 3 affordable units. Ms. Averbuch questioned whether Deerfield schools have room for the additional students.

Resident David Moet asked if Lexington Homes is asking for a subsidy for the fees for removing the trees or how many trees can be removed. Lot 1 appears to be the largest. He asked about the square footage of the units. If there were no exemptions, how many units would be allowed and how many would be affordable. Mr. Moet lives in an area with 48 homes and 1 acre lots. There is a lot of outside traffic. He questioned the safety for children living in this development.

Resident Paul Odell noted the building height will not be screened for many years. He asked if the roofs could be flat, to drop the building height to 28 feet. Mr. Odell asked if the townhouses would have irrevocable bylaws to prevent renting or Air BnBs. Mr. Huvard noted the Plan Commission is looking into an overall policy for rentals and Air BnBs.

Mr. Blalock moved to continue the Public Hearing to November 10, 2022. Ms. Graditor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

#### 4. Adjournment

There being no further business or discussion, Mr. Blalock moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Graditor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 pm.

The next scheduled meeting of the Plan Commission is November 10, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeri Cotton  
Secretary