

Village of Riverwoods
Plan Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes December 1, 2022

A meeting of the Village of Riverwoods Plan Commission was held on Thursday, December 1, 2022 at Village Hall. Chairperson Laurie Breitkopf called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Present:

Karl Blalock
Laurie Breitkopf, Chairperson
Jay Datt
Sherry Graditor
Stephen Levin

Absent:

Carey Rothbardt

1. Visitors wishing to address the Plan Commission

Christy Sherman noted Lexington is asking for mapping and rezoning to 1-R which is the same as Meadowlake which is the only property zoned 1-R in Riverwoods. Ms. Sherman noted Meadowlake was originally zoned R-1 (single family on 1 acre) but it was changed in 1986 to 1-R; however, Meadowlake's declaration and by-laws would not allow multi-family housing.

Ms. Sherman noted the document presented at the last Public Hearing discusses the proposed lot dimensions of approximately 260x150. She questioned how this would be known. Ms. Sherman questioned why this zoning has not been used elsewhere in the Village. The R-1 district provides the Village the authority to achieve excellence in design and she asked how excellence in design is defined. She asked if it includes eco-friendly buildings. Chairperson Breitkopf responded that the PUD ordinance has a list of standards to be used to measure excellence in design.

Ms. Sherman noted Lexington proposes a Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. She would like more information about the zoning changes. Ms. Sherman does not know why the Village would use old zoning (multi-family) for Meadowlake.

Ms. Sherman noted Lexington wants to reduce the residential PUD size from 125 acres to 8 acres. She thinks the development is too big for the small space. Riverwoods is a nature Village and sticking 69 townhomes in 8 acres is not appropriate.

Julie Varvaro believes connecting with nature is what makes Riverwoods special. Riverwoods has a long history of being a community of conservation. Residents should have the ability to connect with nature and enjoy it. She believes the Village should recommit nature and proposes figuring out how to plan for a very necessary sustainable and green future. She asked the Plan Commission use the Village's ordinances to build green townhomes. Riverwoods needs to dream big.

Anthony Wedyck questioned why the Village is considering rezoning for a private sale property. Why should we change the character of the Village for a private sale? Once it is rezoned and built, it cannot be undone. We need to enforce our ordinances instead of allowing a private sale to go through that requires changes to our ordinances. He suggested finding a purchaser for the property who will build under our existing ordinances.

Dave Matzen noted it has been 80 days and the records that have been uploaded are not complete. The Village website shows Lexington Homes Reserve documents. Some of the documents have been renamed and some of the information is very confusing and not readily available.

The affordable housing portion is not consistent with the Village's goal of 15 percent by having only three units plus a \$500,000 in lieu payment. Lexington's Project Narrative and affordable housing action plan were not available on the Village's website as attachments to Lexington's application, and Mr. Matzen asked that these documents be uploaded. The application packet is a public document. Ch. Breitkopf will ask the Village to upload the missing documents to the Village website. Mr. Matzen corrected his statement from November 10, 2022. 75.24 units in Riverwoods are currently classified as affordable by the State. The proposed three units from Lexington would result in Riverwoods having a lower percentage of affordable units because of the number of townhomes proposed. Mr. Matzen asked for Lexington's full application to be properly uploaded. He believes there is a breach of public trust and it needs to be corrected ASAP. He does not believe this proposal is consistent with the Village of Riverwoods. Mr. Matzen is pro-housing but not for an unreasonable development.

David Oler is concerned about all the zoning changes and exceptions being considered to allow the Lexington Corporation to put 69 townhomes on 8 acres. 69 units would require 69 acres to have that density of housing in many areas in Riverwoods. There are other locations in Riverwoods that could better handle that density. Mr. Oler explained the citizens of Riverwoods are concerned this would establish a precedent to allow any developer to place high density townhomes in the Village. The Shoppes of Riverwoods does not have the same quality stores as neighboring properties. Mr. Oler asked that the Village maintain Riverwoods as a preservation community.

Jay Surrender thanked the Plan Commission for listening to the voices of Riverwoods. He questioned what the Board would do if the Plan Commission determined a project to not be viable. Commissioner Datt explained the Plan Commission is a recommending

body. Commissioner Graditor indicated the Plan Commission makes recommendations that are very specific and the Village Board considers the objections. She noted the Plan Commission specifies in a written report what it finds acceptable/not acceptable. The Village Board considers the report and could make adjustments to an application based on the Plan Commission's recommendation. Commissioner Levin noted the Board sometimes rejects or modifies the Plan Commission's recommendation. Mr. Surrender explained the voices of residents are loud and clear about this proposal. The concern is that some of the Trustees have decided townhomes will be built at this location and have suggested Meadowlake residents pick just a couple issues to contest.

Lila McClelland respects that the Plan Commission is obligated to listen to any application and asked if the Plan Commission could send an applicant back to the drawing board. Ch. Breitkopf explained that it is theoretically possible for the Village to tell a potential applicant that its initial concept is inappropriate and should be modified before an application is filed. Mr. Surrender questioned at what point can someone say this is not worth the time of the Plan Commission. Commissioner Datt explained this is a volunteer commission and we do not want to waste time. If an application is submitted, the Plan Commission has to consider it. Mr. Surrender believes asking for the ordinance to be decreased from 125 acres to 8 acres seems unreasonable. Commissioner Levin noted if the Plan Commission sends a non-favorable recommendation to the Trustees, they can still consider approving the application. Mr. Surrender believes there is a level of trust that needs to occur. Commissioner Levin encourages residents to come to Plan Commission and Board of Trustees meetings when there is not a contentious issue. Residents will be very surprised at the high level of transparency.

Mr. Matzen questioned when the recommendation is made and whether it is published online. Commissioner Graditor explained once information is gathered, the Plan Commission will discuss the proposal and vote on it in a public meeting before a recommendation is sent to the Trustees. Ch. Breitkopf said the Plan Commission sends the Board its recommendation in a written report before the Trustees discuss the matter at a public Board meeting. Mr. Matzen questioned whether an application will have to be resubmitted if the developer changes their plan. He believes a substantial change would alter the traffic studies, school studies, police and fire services etc. Mr. Matzen would want to see all of the documents resubmitted.

Matthew Eisenstein noted when residents oppose a project and a project is cancelled, it appears the residents get punished. He cited the southeast corner of Deerfield Road and Milwaukee Avenue, where the Thorntons gas station is being built. He expressed concern if the Lexington project is nixed, a worse project would be proposed for the site. Mr. Eisenstein noted what is adequate water detention today may not be adequate tomorrow. With the proposed density, he is concerned about the stormwater management. Mr. Eisenstein questioned why the Village cannot get projects that are more in line with Riverwoods.

Peter Kovierski asked what can be done if someone comes in with a proposal that is ridiculous. Designs have rules. Lexington is proposing an 800% density increase. Thorngate received a 200% density increase.

Randy Yaffe questioned who is looking at ensuring what Lexington is stating is accurate and sufficient. He asked who is looking at how the digging will affect the trees and wildlife. Who is going to check Lexington's traffic data? How will it affect the residents? What will happen if there are issues after the development is built?

Julie Donley asked what happens when the river floods. She asked if that is separate from stormwater runoff. Ch. Breitkopf noted the Village Engineer would look at that question.

Marvin Himmelstein asked what benefit the development would have for the Village.

Sheryl Rue-Borden does not believe this process is transparent enough. A Trustee told her that townhomes will be built on the site. This is not a Meadowlake issue; rather, it is a Village of Riverwoods issue. People buy in Riverwoods because of the wilderness and 1-acre minimum lot sizes.

Matt Bellagamba signed the petition against this development. He thinks it is a bad project as proposed. Mr. Bellagamba noted the current building is an eyesore, but believes the number of variances requested by Lexington Homes is excessive. He hopes the Village fully rejects the project and a better project comes along.

Ms. Varvaro is a four-year resident and, in that time, two new homes were built with a lot of trees being removed. Now, a lot of trees are dead and the area is flooding. Riverwoods has to do a better job being proactive.

3. Old Business

Continuation of 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.

Commissioner Graditor moved to continue the Public Hearing to the January 5, 2023 meeting. Commissioner Levin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

4. New Business

There was no new business.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business or discussion, Ms. Datt moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Blalock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 pm.

The next scheduled meeting of the Plan Commission is January 5, 2023 at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeri Cotton