

**AGENDA REPORT
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
July 9, 2020**

SUMMARY

A request by A Civil Group (agent) on behalf of West Rock II, LLC (owners) for approval of a rezoning and development plan to be known as, "The Godfrey PD Plan." The applicant is proposing 4, 4-unit apartment buildings (16 units) with vehicular access onto Green Meadows Road. Their 1.45-acre property is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Green Meadows Drive and Green Meadows Circle. **(Case #127-2020)**

DISCUSSION

The applicants are seeking to rezone their property at the northwest corner of Green Meadows Road and Green Meadows Circle, from R-1 (One-family Dwelling) to PD (Planned District) to facilitate the construction of four apartment buildings, each housing four, two-bedroom units. The proposed PD plan depicts these units arranged around a central parking area, with 3 buildings to the west and one to the east. Each building is oriented to face the entry drive and parking area. Each unit includes a one-car garage (16 total spaces) and there are 34 on-site surface parking spaces provided residents and visitors. The on-site surface parking provided is 15 spaces in excess of those required.

Rezoning Considerations

A concept review meeting was held in November 2019 to discuss the development of the subject property (see attached development proposal). At that time staff determined that the use of a planned district was appropriate in this location due to a number of factors, including the unique nature of the location and visual prominence of the property on Green Meadows Road, as well many site factors, like limited access, the shape of the lot, and the location of the property near the entrance to the Green Meadows and Greenbriar-Trail Ridge neighborhoods; both single-family developments.

Planned districts are intended to allow for innovation and flexibility in design, to encourage creative mixes of complimentary uses, and to promote environmentally sound and efficient use of land. The stated objectives of planned districts are to allow for a mixture of housing types and uses, to provide more-usable open space and amenities, and provide, to the City, amenities or benefits that help achieve the goals of Columbia Imagined which are not otherwise required of the base zoning districts.

During the concept review, the potential project density and maximum number of dwelling units upon the subject site were discussed. It was concluded that a reasonable number of dwelling units would be approximately 12, which equates to a development density of approximately 8-9 dwelling units per acre. These conclusions were offered given the site's proximity to Rock Bridge Christian Church, multiple single-family neighborhoods, and to at least two heavily trafficked intersections.

Staff finds that the site is a transitional property providing a demarcation between more intense development generally to the south and east and less intense development to the north and west. Staff agrees that the subject site is a candidate for greater development densities than that of the contextual single-family housing to the north and west; however, also believes the density should be capped and

use of the site should be more contextually sensitive through construction of housing forms more compatible with the less intensely developed areas surrounding the site.

Development Plan Considerations

The attached PD plan depicts development of a four building apartment complex flanking a central driveway access off of Green Meadows Road. The proposed buildings will each contained four 2-bedroom dwelling units. Each dwelling unit has an attached garage. 34 additional on-site surface parking spaces are shown on the plan which is 15 spaces over the minimum amount required per the UDC.

The proposed setbacks shown on the PD plan reflect setbacks depicted on Rock Bridge Christian Church Plat 2, with 25' on the Green Meadows Circle frontage, 15' on Green Meadows Road frontage, and 20' provided on the western property boundary. The 20' setback is offered as a buffer between the proposed multi-family units and the church immediately to the west, and also accommodates a 16' sanitary sewer easement serving the western residential units.

While these setbacks are being shown on the PD plan they are not considered consistent with the setbacks which would be required for the type of development now being proposed. The proposed setbacks would permit buildings to be located approximately 18' from a major collector roadway. This is out of character with the area given all other multi-family uses are screened from Green Meadows by means of vegetation or berms and maintain setbacks 25' or greater.

In response to review comments regarding the apparent reversal of the generally applicable setbacks for such development and its orientation, the applicant responded "they desired to honor the recorded setbacks shown on Plat 2." The recorded setbacks were based on the existing R-1 zoning of the property and access restrictions applicable to single-family development onto Green Meadows Road which is the only development presently permitted on the site. As a point of clarification, since Plat 2 was recorded the requirement that setbacks be shown on final plats has been eliminated from the platting requirements.

Pursuant to the provisions within the UDC related to PD plan approval, the Commission may recommend and the Council may approve revisions to UDC's dimensional requirements of which setbacks is a modifiable element. Given these provisions, the applicant's submitted PD plan and variation in setbacks is permitted and will need to be considered in conjunction with a recommendation on this request.

The proposed access to the subject site is from Green Meadows Road. This is permitted given the proposed development is multi-family. Staff is supportive of this access arrangement given that the existing single-family neighborhoods are almost exclusively accessed from the east via Green Meadows Circle; particularly for those homes on Greenbriar Drive and Melody Lane. Restricting access to the proposed development to Green Meadow Road will assist in minimizing potential increased traffic impacts from the new development. It should be noted that a proposed driveway to access the site's trash collection dumpster would be accessible from Green Meadows Circle.

Design Exception Considerations

The proposed site design would require a design exception from the requirements of Section 29-4.7(f) which states that newly constructed structures shall provide front entrances oriented toward the street from which the property is addressed. The east-facing buildings (abutting the church property) generally face the intersection of Green Meadows Road and Green Meadows Circle; however, the west-facing building faces the internal parking lot and does not meet this requirement. The applicants are seeking relief from this requirement to allow the front entrance to be closest to the parking area, and to avoid the need for construction of sidewalks around the building and outward to connect to the existing public sidewalks.

Staff views the need for this design exception as evidence that the proposed building layout and density of the development exceed the capacity of the property. Fewer structures or a different building form would allow for compliance with this UDC provision. Approval of this exception would result in diminishing the visual quality and sense of arrival into the surrounding neighborhoods which is counter to the Comprehensive Plan's goals and objectives of creating "livable and sustainable" neighborhoods that promote walkability and connectivity.

Additionally, it should be restated that the applicant is seeking approval of the PD plan with the setbacks as shown. These setbacks are not consistent with adjoining development and are considered by staff, given the design of the project, to be reversed from what would be typically applied to this property. The setbacks, if approved, would permit dwelling units within approximately 18.7' of the Green Meadows Drive right of way. This proximity would significantly limit future right of way modifications. Furthermore, approval of the exception would impact the visual characteristics of the surrounding development and diminish the quality of life for development residents.

Conclusion

Staff believes the requested PD (Planned District) zoning is appropriate for this location due the site's constraints and the opportunity it afford developers to use creative solutions to mitigate contextual impacts. However, the proposed development plan appears to be an effort to maximize density on a high-visibility site that is located along a high-traffic corridor. The PD plan fails to incorporate enhanced amenities, quality open space for its users or the City, and offers little innovation in its design or housing options all of which are core purposes for why a property should be considered for rezoning to a PD district. Furthermore, the proposed setbacks shown on the Plan are contextually out of character with similarly dense developments along the Green Meadows corridor. The setbacks should be reestablished to ensure a proper setback is achieved from Green Meadows Road.

The 2019 concept plan for this site depicts a development pattern more contextually appropriate for this acreage. While the plan does not contain the same level of development intensity as the proposed PD plan, it is believed that the plan better supports the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan by introducing and providing opportunities to construct varied housing types within this location of the City.

RECOMMENDATION

Deny the requested rezoning from R-1 to PD, and the associated PD plan and design exception.

ATTACHMENTS

- Locator maps
- Proposed Statement of Intent
- Proposed Godfrey PD Plan
- Concept Review Plan (11/19/2019)
- Applicant's Density Exhibit

HISTORY

Annexation date	1964
Zoning District	R-1 (Single-Family Residential)
Land Use Plan designation	Neighborhood District
Previous Subdivision/Legal Lot Status	Lot 202, Rock Bridge Christian Church Plat 2

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Area (acres)	1.45
Topography	Generally flat, slight slope to the east
Vegetation/Landscaping	Turf/Natural
Watershed/Drainage	Perche Creek
Existing structures	Vacant

UTILITIES & SERVICES

Sanitary Sewer	All utilities and services provided by the City of Columbia
Water	
Fire Protection	
Electric	

ACCESS

Green Meadows Road	
Location	South side of property
Major Roadway Plan	Major Collector
CIP projects	N/A
Sidewalk	Sidewalks constructed

Green Meadows Circle	
Location	North side of property
Major Roadway Plan	N/A
CIP projects	N/A
Sidewalk	Sidewalks constructed

PARKS & RECREATION

Neighborhood Parks	Rock Bridge Park
Trails Plan	N/A
Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan	Both access roadways are Green Routes

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

All property owners within 200 feet and City-recognized neighborhood associations within 1,000 feet of the boundaries of the subject property were notified of this pending request on June 8, 2020. 11 postcards were distributed.

Public information meeting recap	Number of attendees: N/A (No mtg held due to COVID-19) Comments/concerns: General inquires received; concerns with multi-family expressed.
Notified neighborhood association(s)	Green Meadows NA, Village South HOA, Crescent Green HOA, Greenbriar-Trail Ridge NA
Correspondence received	None

Report prepared by Rusty Palmer

Approved by Patrick Zenner