

EXCERPTS
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
COLUMBIA CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER
701 EAST BROADWAY, COLUMBIA, MO
May 8, 2025

Case Number 166-2025

A request by A Civil Group (agent) on behalf of Mendez Properties, LLC, (owner) for approval of a 23-lot preliminary plat to be known as Totolmajac Villages. The preliminary plat shows division of the property into 22 cottage-style lots and a common lot and will require Board of Adjustment authorization to use "optional" development standards permitting reduced lot width, setbacks, and lot area. A concurrent request (Case Number 167-2025) seeking rezoning of the property from R-1 (One-family Dwelling) to R-2 (Two-family Dwelling) has been submitted. The 5.09-acre subject site is located at 3310 Oakland Gravel Road and is presently improved with a single-family dwelling and two outbuildings.

MS. GEUEA JONES: May we have a staff report?

Staff report was given by Mr. Rusty Palmer of the Planning and Development Department. Staff recommends approval of the proposed 23-lot preliminary plat known as "Totolmajac Villages", pursuant to approval of the cottage "optional dimensional standards" by the Board of Adjustment.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. Before we go to questions for staff, if any of my fellow Commissioners have had any contact with parties to this case outside of a public hearing, please disclose so now. Seeing none. Any questions for staff? Commissioner Williams?

MR. WILLIAMS: I have a compound question. I see on the -- before we talked about trees, and I see on the plot there's notations for significant deciduous and significant coniferous trees. What are the requirements related to these significant trees, and, secondly, what are we empowered and/or instructed to consider with respect to those trees and this plot?

MR. PALMER: For this body, I would say we have -- as a staff, we have confirmed that it is compliant with the Code requirements, and those Code requirements are 25 percent, I believe, of all climax forest, plus 25 percent of the significant trees, which are 20 inches in diameter or greater. So if those are denoted on there to be preserved, then those are meeting that requirement. And this has been reviewed and approved by our arborist, so it is in compliance.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any other questions for staff? Commissioner Ortiz?

MS. ORTIZ: When this -- if this is recommended to go to the Board of Adjustment, do they receive, like, an excerpt of our minutes with that, or is it, like, an independent, like --

MR. ZENNER: No, they'll receive an excerpt because based upon the conversations that we have here, the Board is wanting to understand what the back story was with --

MS. ORTIZ: Uh-huh.

MR. ZENNER: -- the Planning Commission's deliberation on the platting action. It's not necessarily as focused on the zoning component of it. And given that we have two separate cases here, what will end up happening is we'll excerpt out the case minutes for 166. They will be provided that. I have been asked as a part of cottage standard presentation, and there's a slight disconnect between the Board of Adjustment's understanding that they can't approve optional development standards until the plat is approved, whereas, in actuality, the way that the procedural section of the Code reads, you cannot approve a plat, should not be approving a plat, but we do it in this instance because they're tied together without the Board first granting authorization. Where there is relief or a variance required, it should be that that relief is provided by the Board first in order to process these actions effectively. That particular provision, we have not attached it directly to cottage because cottage requires the zoning and they can't even consider cottage standards without zoning being done first. And so the public is -- is given greater levels of assurance, as we talked about with the rezoning action, we have requested that the applicant pursue both the rezoning and the preliminary plat together, so there is a package, and it is understood this is the intent. On larger cottage standard developments which we have taken a number through the Board, they understand this process. When we take an individual lot, however, it becomes very confusing to them, and there is no differentiation within our development code that you could seek cottage development standards on a single lot. You don't have to do it by a subdivision. And so we will provide them the minutes. I am the one that gives the presentations to the Board, so that's -- I'm -- I'm the point of contact, and I'll be able to convey the ideas, compliance, and then the issues that the Commission had. And the case that Mr. Williams refers to with Wyatt, that has come in. That is scheduled for the Board of Adjustment's action in May. We will make very clear and we made clear with the applicant when they made that submission for BOA approval that the issue with the rear yard setback needed to be addressed. And just you are aware, the rear yard setback has been addressed on the submitted plans that will go to the Board. So they would have been made aware of the concern that the Commission expressed as part of that approval of the subdivision plat and the zoning. You can rest assured that as long as I'm here, the Board is informed of what you do when they have to be informed of actions that are interrelated.

MS. ORTIZ: Thank you.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Brodsky?

MR. BRODSKY: On the last cottage style development that Mr. Gebhardt brought to us, I believe the roads on that one were 24 feet, and we couldn't have any parking because it would kick it below 20 feet. In this instance, it seems like we could, if we wanted to, have the option to allow parking on both sides that would bring that corridor below 20 feet. Is that an option for us -- or it just seems like a little bit of a disconnect.

MR. ZENNER: I think the way that Mr. Palmer stated it is if you all do not want to reduce below 28 -- so 28 feet will you allow you to put parallel parking on one side. Presently, the way that the Code

reads on a 28-foot-wide street, parking is permissible on both. If you want to condition the approval of the plat that parking shall only be permitted on one side such that there is 20 feet of travel -- fire lane travel with left, that is an option that you have available to you. It is not something that we have requested that the applicant do. We haven't requested that of the Public Works staff either. So it is a discretionary call at this point. This is a topic that I am sure we will address as a part of wrapping up the small lot standards because of not only A, the issue with the setbacks, but also ensuring that we have adequate fire access.

MR. BRODSKY: And what would be standard in a typical R-1 development? Twenty-eight feet?

MR. ZENNER: Twenty-eight feet is the standard, and so that's where this is -- that's where this is -- this is somewhat of a new development over time. So our subdivision streets used to be 32-foot-wide subdivision streets, and even if you provided parking on both sides of a 32, you would still be less than 20. However, as our fire apparatus has grown over the years in size, the fire service has become a little bit more concerned. That is one reason why we went from a -- a much smaller radii or a diameter cul-de-sac prior to 2017 to the 96-foot-wide cul-de-sac that we presently have. And so as fire apparatus sizes have increased, they so too have become more cognizant of the concerns with limiting access for their vehicles. And so I think it did catch Mr. Gebhardt off guard that we all of a sudden were indicating a concern with parking, even though it has historically always been allowed, and I think we will be seeing this more and more frequently. Depending on the nature of the street segment, I would imagine our traffic engineer may take a more forward approach in suggesting that parking restrictions be incorporated in developer-imposed restrictions on certain platting actions, and this one he did not, so that's why Mr. Palmer made the comment that he made.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any further questions for staff? Seeing none. We will go to public comment.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

MS. GEUEA JONES: If any members of the public are here to speak on this case, please come forward.

MR. GEBHARDT: Good evening. Jay Gebhardt, a civil engineer and land surveyor with A Civil Group. I just want to kind of go through a couple of things here. First, it's my policy in my company that when we do a rezoning or a preliminary plat or anything, that we -- we contact the neighbors first. And I always want to do that as early as possible in this, so we did hold a meeting on the site and we did have a good attendance to that. As far as the parking situation, in 2012, the City of Columbia adopted new street standards, and then this went from 32 foot, as Pat said, to a 28-foot street. So since 2012, we've been building 28-foot streets in every single-family res-- and now we have this issue of that it doesn't comply with the 20-foot fire code situation. So I would ask that with this, especially with the cottage development, that allowing parking on both sides is -- is a good thing. We do have plans for two-car garages on these with a driveway, but allowing parking on both sides, I think, would alleviate concerns of the neighbors of the number of cars that are -- will be with this development. Other than that, I just wanted to ask if you

guys have any questions or concerns about the trees, about the setbacks in the back, the drainage easements, and -- and, Rusty, can you bring up your slide that showed your kind of layout of the easements and everything? Yes. I wanted to point out that you can see the proposed drainage pipes on that, but there's a lot of area there in that easement that is not needed for the drainage. It's being proposed mainly to preserve those trees. And what's weird about the tree preservation ordinances, you can only save trees in a certain clump, and it's got to be a certain ratio. And so that linear strip of trees along that south line, we're saving those, but we don't get to count them toward our tree preservation. So that's just a -- an illustration here that we are saving trees along that south line, but we can't really show them as tree preservation. They don't count toward the 25 percent minimum. And as far as significant trees, we do have to save 25 percent of those, also.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Stanton?

MR. STANTON: Yeah. Probably we're discussing the road width. Currently it's 28.

MR. GEBHARDT: Yeah.

MR. STANTON: You're proposing bigger so you can park on both sides --

MR. GEBHARDT: No.

MR. STANTON: -- or we leave it here and just allow parking on both sides?

MR. GEBHARDT: I'm asking to do what the City's street standards allow, which is 28 foot.

MR. STANTON: Yeah. Okay.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any other questions for this speaker? Commissioner Loe?

MS. LOE: Mr. Gebhardt, when we see the cottage proposals, we often end up talking about introducing a mix of housing types. But the proposals themselves often are still a more or less uniform set of lots. They're just being introduced into a community that might have a different size of lot sizes. I appreciated seeing some mix in lot sizes because I understand it may have been introduced by the curve in Glorietta, but I would love to see more development, or more mix happen at the street scale, that we don't just have a street of uniform lots. I really do think having a variety of lot sizes along the street will make the neighborhoods more interesting, so thank you for that. And I appreciate the setbacks, and I also check the roads when it came through, and aside from it being wider, I appreciate having the open common areas adjacent so that we have some curve without driveways, so there really is an area where people could park. Thank you.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any further questions for this speaker? Commissioner Williams?

MR. WILLIAMS: Mr. Gebhardt, what's the depth of the -- the easement -- easements in red just at -- on the north side, it seems even, and then on the south side, it's -- you know, it's a wedge. So at that -- that narrowest part between the southern border and on Lot 122, there's -- what's the -- what's the --

MR. GEBHARDT: It's 118 feet is the -- and that's the shallowest lot on there. The ones on the north look like they're -- they range, that are approximately about 135 feet, 138 feet.

MR. WILLIAMS: I was actually looking at just on the easement, what's the width of the --

MR. GEBHARDT: Oh. Width?

MR. WILLIAMS: -- easement on the north and the -- the road seems pretty even on the south, on the smallest point.

MR. GEBHARDT: Yeah. It starts -- yeah. The north one is a 16-foot easement. Okay? And the -- the south one starts at 20 feet and then just gets wider as you go east.

MR. WILLIAMS: So would you say that in your experience, I think 20 feet is roughly the distance between you and me right now. Maybe it's a little more, a little less. But given the current vegetation there, that would be a fairly -- it would provide pretty full coverage in terms of just screening a view from one side of that to the other?

MR. GEBHARDT: Well, the homes to the south, Thomas, are lower than this, so they'll be looking up at this. As we get to Lot 122, the construction of the storm drainage will take out a significant amount of those trees right there. But as we go to the east, that construction won't touch those trees, and there's no reason to remove them. This project, when we first started it several years ago, there was comments from the neighbors about, you know, I wouldn't say severe, but very concerning storm drainage coming down that slope and into their backyards and causing concern. So part of what we're doing here is trying to capture all that water before it comes down into their backyards. And so it's necessary to remove those trees in order to address that drainage for that.

MR. WILLIAMS: Well, I just want to appreciate -- I appreciate that the buffer, not just from the property lines, but just preserving the Woodland buffer, whether it's, you know, trees of -- of value or they're just -- you know, it's -- it's brush and -- and such. I think it just helps preserve the character of the neighborhood, so I just appreciate that.

MR. GEBHARDT: And then the intent here is with the preliminary plat through this multi-step process that we go through, is to show the intent that it will be single family, and that is -- that is the intent of Jesus when he wants -- this is what he wants to do, so I -- I don't know what would happen if the Board of Adjustment were to deny it, but I would -- I would guess that he would still do single-family homes on this.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Brodsky?

MR. BRODSKY: On -- Mr. Gebhardt, on the last cottage development you brought to us, I remember you discussing a little bit the narrow nature of the lots, and when you put in sidewalks, that it really limits the on-street parking. Is that as much concern with this one because it has slightly wider lots?

MR. GEBHARDT: These lots are about the same size, so you'll get a one-car between each driveway, and that's why I think it's important to park on both sides because if you eliminate parking, say, on the -- you wouldn't want to do it on the south side because, as Sara said, that's where a bulk of the parking could occur without any driveways. But if you eliminate on the north side, you're going to basically eliminate a parking space for each lot that we could happen on the street for visitors or teenage -- teenagers that -- that type of thing.

MR. BRODSKY: Thank you.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any further questions for this speaker? Seeing none. Thank you very

much.

MR. GEBHARDT: Thank you.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Anyone else to speak on this case this evening, please come forward.

Seeing none. We will close public comment.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner comments? Any Commissioner comments on this case?

Seeing none. Commissioner Stanton, do you have something? Sorry.

MR. STANTON: I would like to entertain a motion, but I would like the screen up so I can read it off of the staff notes.

MS. GEUEA JONES: There we go.

MR. STANTON: As it relates to -- oh, do my colleagues have any other discussion? As it relates to Case 166-2025, 3310 Oakland Gravel Road, preliminary plat, I move to approve the proposed 23-lot preliminary plat pursuant to the cottage standards by the Board of Adjustment. If R-2 zoning request is denied, the preliminary plat cannot be approved, which we already did. Right?

MS. GEUEA JONES: Is there a second?

MR. BRODSKY: Second.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Moved by Mr. Stanton, seconded by Commissioner Brodsky. Is there any discussion on the motion? Seeing none. Commissioner Williams, may we have a roll call?

Roll Call Vote (Voting "yes" is to recommend approval) Voting Yes: Ms. Ortiz, Ms. Placier, Mr. Stanton, Ms. Geuea Jones, Mr. Williams, Ms. Loe, Mr. Walters, Mr. Brodsky. Motion carries 8-0.

MR. WILLIAMS: Eight to zero, the motion carries.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. That recommendation will be forwarded to City Council. Moving on to our next case for the evening.