

EXCERPTS
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

Case Number 199-2019

A request by Crockett Engineering (agent) on behalf of AMW Investment Properties, LLC (owner) to revise the existing "Sidra Subdivision PD Plan," to permit the construction of a carport structure over existing parking spaces, the installation of solar panels on top of and adjacent to the carport structure, and the construction of a small equipment shed near the west end of the residential structures to house components of the solar system. The subject site is located at 2002 Rashid Court, and contains 0.86 acres.

MS. LOE: May we have a staff report, please.

Staff report was given by Mr. Rusty Palmer of the Planning and Development Committee. Staff recommends approval of the proposed revisions to the "Sidra Subdivision PD Plan."

MS. LOE: Thank you, Mr. Palmer. Before we move on to Commissioner questions, I would like to ask Commissioners if anyone has had any ex parte prior to this meeting related to this case to please to disclose that now so all Commissioners have the same information to consider on behalf of the case in front of us. I see none. Any questions for staff? Mr. MacMann?

MR. MACMANN: I have one -- I have a question. Thank you, Madam Chair. Planner Palmer, I remember this case somewhat. First off, I'd like to say yay for solar. I'm glad we're making this accommodation. If I recall correctly -- and I might be a little fuzzy, so help me here. The properties to the north and some of the surrounding neighbors were less than please, as people can be over time. We have had no further feedback on that?

MR. PALMER: Thanks for bring it up. I forgot to mention. There were -- well, there was one comment that was included in the staff report e-mailed to me by a neighboring property owner. And they are concerned about aesthetics mainly, and then also the increased impervious area, but the plan does take into account the increased area. They're basically digging out the detention pond.

MR. MACMANN: They're taking more out of that pond to accommodate that very -- because that was an issue given the slope. I remember that.

MR. PALMER: Correct. Yeah.

MR. MACMANN: It really came down. Okay. Thank you very much. I just remembered this -- not contentious, but there was a fair amount of concern.

MR. PALMER: Exactly.

MS. LOE: Any additional questions for staff? Ms. Rushing?

MS. RUSHING: Oh -- the retention wall -- okay -- retaining wall is located where -- the proposed retaining --

MR. PALMER: It's the orange line that curls around the north end of the structures.

MS. RUSHING: Oh. Way up there. So it's really not related to the covered parking?

MR. PALMER: Correct. And it doesn't impact the screening and landscaping that was required.

MS. RUSHING: And the reason for putting the panels on the ground as opposed to on the roof?

MR. PALMER: I'm not sure. I mean, obviously, they're putting some on the -- on the carport structure and I think just -- well, I don't want to speculate. But the other 800 square feet is ground mounted, just, I'm assuming, because they needed another 800 square feet to make it feasible.

MS. RUSHING: And they're not required to do any screening?

MR. PALMER: Not anything additional, no.

MS. LOE: Any additional questions of staff? Seeing none, we will open up the public comment period.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

MS. LOE: Please give your name and address for the record.

MR. CROCKETT: Madam Chair, members of the Commission, Tim Crockett with Crockett Engineer, offices at 1000 West Nifong. The plan before you tonight is very similar to the one that was approved by this Commission back in 2017, two years ago this month. Pretty much the only addition that we're asking for tonight is the added -- the addition of the -- the covered parking and the solar panels, as well as a retaining wall. Now, I think there was some -- some discussion two years ago with regards to this development and the pedestrian traffic that might migrate north to the existing convenience store at that -- that's located north of this development. The retaining wall, by virtue, will eliminate that pedestrian traffic. It will take it, push to go out toward the -- the public sidewalks, and so that kind of resolves itself. With regards to the carports, that -- those are going over existing parking lots, so it's not that we're asking for additional parking or additional impervious surface. That's already on paved surfaces that we're asking to cover with the -- with the carports for covered parking. And then, of course, the solar panels would go on top of the carports and then some out in front of it, as well. The additional building, obviously, is needed to handle the equipment for the solar array. We did talk to -- talk to the installer and asked about putting them on the building themselves and he said it was -- and this was kind of a later change to add solar at this point. And so he said really it's kind of a -- kind of tough to do at this late in the game given the size, given the slope, given the location and angle and all that. And so he said really we want them together on top of the carport and then out in front. We tried to get it all on top of the carport, but it -- we needed more than that. Just as a point of reference, this will be basically split up into five systems, so each unit will have an allotted amount of solar power. So it's not that one system -- one unit gets to use it all, then everybody else pays the going rate. Each five of the units will get an allotted amount of solar to use and so, hopefully, that, you know, greatly reduces their utility bill. So again those are the minor changes that we're making to this plan. I'm happy to answer any questions should you have any.

MS. LOE: Questions? Mr. MacMann?

MR. MACMANN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Crockett, question on the carport roof. Is that a

guttered structure?

MR. CROCKETT: Yes.

MR. MACMANN: So we might even have better water control?

MR. CROCKETT: We do -- we have very tight water control for the whole entire site, yes.

MR. MACMANN: All right. That's what I wanted to know. Thank you very much.

MS. LOE: Ms. Rushing?

MS. RUSHING: So I see some trees proposed along the edge of that property. Is there any other landscaping that the owner is contemplating?

MR. CROCKETT: Yes, Ms. Rushing. There's some landscaping to the north. There's some screening material that goes along to the north of the property line to screen it from the adjacent property. And then there will be some other landscaping up around the building, as well. The -- the trees that you see on the plan there are the street trees and the pavement trees that are required by the ordinance, so there will be additional landscaping on top of what is shown there.

MS. RUSHING: Because right now, it's -- it's pretty highly visible because the property is so bare.

MR. CROCKETT: Absolutely. And there will be -- there will be some additional landscaping put on that property compared to what's there prior to development.

MS. LOE: Any additional questions for Mr. Crockett? Mr. Crockett, the comment that we received from a neighbor was about the aesthetics of the building itself. I was wondering will the carport structure and solar panels potentially screen the sight lines to the building?

MR. CROCKETT: I think it -- I think it will be. The actual carport we're looking at is going to be a cantilevered system, so it's not the typical carport that you envision that has a bunch of columns out there and it's a -- you know, it's more of a cantilever-type system, so it's going to be a little more modern looking compared to some others that you've seen before in the past. And so I think it will kind of fit in with that building. And I think there's some concern over the -- the aesthetics of the building, and I think it's just a little more modern and a little bit different than what some people are accustomed to.

MS. LOE: I'm thinking more that the solar panels will be angled if it plays --

MR. CROCKETT: Yes. Correct.

MS. LOE: -- above the -- or off the roof so that you'll see the solar panels or the -- between the trees, the perimeter trees and the solar panels, there will be less of a direct view of the building as you're approaching?

MR. CROCKETT: Of the building. That's correct.

MS. RUSHING: It's raised and that's my concern. This area is up above this. So there's not going to a whole lot of screening of the carport area by these trees.

MS. LOE: Oh, I don't think solar panels are necessarily bad to look at, though.

MS. RUSHING: That's my concern when you're talking about aesthetics. The building and the carport are all going to be up here. Then there's this slope down with the drainage area, so this is going to be really, really visible. I mean, it's not --

MS. LOE: True. But some neighbors may find the solar panels more attractive than the structure was my point.

MS. RUSHING: That's possible.

MS. LOE: Any other comments or questions for this speaker? Mr. Toohey?

MR. TOOHEY: So did the applicant think about this in the original design and just decided not to go with that because of the expense, and now the expense is lower?

MR. CROCKETT: I'm not sure -- I'm not sure when -- when Ann came up with the idea, but I know it wasn't -- it wasn't an initial item that we were -- that we discussed during the original proposal. It came at a later date.

MS. LOE: Additional questions, comments? Thank you, Mr. Crockett.

MR. CROCKETT: Thank you.

MS. LOE: Any additional speakers on this case? Seeing none, I'm going to close public comment.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

MS. LOE: Commissioner discussion? Ms. Russell? I think you've done your duty, but if you want to volunteer.

MS. RUSSELL: In the case of 199-2019, I move to approve the proposed major amendment to the Sidra Subdivision PD Plan.

MR. MACMANN: Second.

MS. LOE: Second by Mr. MacMann. We have a motion on the floor. Any discussion on that motion? I see none. Ms. Burns, may we have a roll call, please.

MS. BURNS: Yes.

Roll Call Vote (Voting "yes" is to recommend approval.) Voting Yes: Ms. Burns, Ms. Carroll, Ms. Loe, Mr. MacMann, Mr. Strodman, Ms. Russell, Mr. Toohey. Voting No: Ms. Rushing. Motion carries 7-1.

MS. BURNS: Seven to one, motion carries.

MS. LOE: Thank you. Recommendation for approval will be forwarded to City Council.