

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

Case Number 167-2025

A request by A Civil Group (agent), on behalf of Mendez Properties, LLC (owner) for approval to rezone 5.09 acres from R-1 (one-family dwelling) to R-2 (two-family dwelling). The subject site is located at 3310 Oakland Gravel Road and is being considered with a concurrent request (Case Number 166-2025) seeking approval of a preliminary plat inclusive of 23 single-family cottage-style lots pursuant to approval of the R-2 "optional development standards" by the Board of Adjustment.

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

Staff report was given by Mr. Rusty Palmer of the Planning and Development Department. Staff recommends approval of the requested rezoning to the R-2 district.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. Before we go to questions for staff, if any of my fellow Commissioners have had contact with parties to this case outside of a public hearing, please disclose so now. Seeing none. Any questions for staff? I had one quick one, Rusty. The cottage standard 23 lots, how would that compare to a density if they built this as R-2 duplexes, do you know?

MR. PALMER: I don't know the exact numbers, but it's very comparable. It would be the difference of one or two units, probably at the -- the end of the day. The one kind of factor, it's all being developed, so the storm water component and everything still apply. If it were developed piecemeal and single family, like traditional R-1 lots, they could potentially not have to do storm water, but it would -- it would probably all have to be platted together anyway, so the R-1, I think you would lose maybe three lots, and with the R-2, you're -- you're somewhere between there. It's really not much of a different.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Got it. So even if this stayed R-1, we're looking at 20 lots probably?

MR. PALMER: Eighteen to twenty, yeah.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Eighteen to twenty lots. Thank you. Any other questions for staff? Seeing none. Thank you very much. We will open the floor to public comment.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any members of the public who would like to speak on this case, please come forward.

MR. GEBHARDT: Good evening. This is Jay Gebhardt; I'm a civil engineer with the A Civil Group on site representing Jesus Mendez, the owner of the property. I think staff has done a pretty good job of explaining this. If you guys have questions, I would be glad to answer them, but I know you have a

long meeting, so I don't want to just sit up here and talk.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you for that. Any questions for Mr. Gebhardt tonight? Seeing -- oh. Commissioner Placier, go ahead.

MS. PLACIER: Yeah. Just one question about the wooded nature of this area. Is there any plan for tree preservation? Is it even possible with this density?

MR. GEBHARDT: Yes. So there's -- on the preliminary plat, you'll see a common area lot that's being set aside for this storm water detention and the required 25 percent of the climax forest to be saved. And don't confuse that. I don't want to misrepresent anything, and the arborist has determined that there -- probably about a third of these trees are cedars and things that don't qualify for a climax forest, so the area we've saved is the minimum requirement for the climax forest.

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

MR. GEBHARDT: Thank you.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any other member of the public to speak on this case tonight, please come forward. And again, name and address for the record -- for our record.

MS. MACY: Thanks. My name is Jessica Macy; I live at 2401 East Oakland Ridge. We're directly south of the plat on the corner of Oakland Gravel and Oakland Ridge. Thanks to A Civil Group for having a community meeting. We probably had -- I don't know, 15 or so community folks show up and talk about and hear what was going to happen going from the 15 currently platted to the 23. Some concerns were brought up about 46 cars coming into the neighborhood, in and out of an already incredibly busy intersection. There is lots of storm water, which I am grateful that that maybe this will help take care of. The whole neighborhood slopes towards Oakland Park in that direction. And I think a big concern of mine was seeing the duplex situation. When the map was presented and we all talked about it at the community meeting, that was never brought up that there could potentially be duplexes, otherwise, I think we might have some more neighbors here talking about that situation. And I think that's it. So I just -- oh. And the trees, there are some amazingly beautiful big trees on that lot, and one of them came down during the tornado, but there are many in the designated area that will be wiped out. We're lucky enough to be behind the retention pond and hopefully have some value increase to our house from that, but there are lot of, I think, concerns in the neighborhood about how the traffic specifically is going to be impacted.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. And to be clear, no one else is talking about duplexes. I was just comparing density in different plat.

MS. MACY: Well, if the replat is not approved, it said that it could be open for duplexes, and that was a concern that was brought up, and it was very clearly presented that this would all be single-family housing.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Yes. And that's most likely the case. I just didn't want you to take what I said as money.

MS. MACY: No. I was going off the sign.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Okay.

MR. STANTON: Yeah. But I'm going to reinforce that. Right, if we don't approve his plan, he could just do duplexes.

MS. MACY: Right. And that is definitely a concern of the neighbors.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Walters?

MR. WALTERS: But he would have to come back for -- it's not like we switch from this to this as a result of this meeting.

MS. MACY: Okay. There would be another opportunity to speak on that?

MR. WALTERS: Yes.

MS. MACY: Thank you. I appreciate it.

MS. GEUEA JONES: They would have to replat it. I'm looking at staff. They'd have to replat it?

MR. PALMER: It's more dependent on the zoning decision, so the decision on this, if we go R-2 and deny the plat --

MR. WALTERS: Okay.

MR. PALMER: -- then they would come back with a different plat that would potentially be for duplexes or single-family homes, whatever. If we approve the zoning and the plat, we're moving in the right direction, basically, so --

MS. GEUEA JONES: And then if Board of Adjustment denies cottage standard --

MR. PALMER: Right.

MS. GEUEA JONES: -- they're stuck with that plat or they have to come back for a new plat.

MR. PALMER: It would not be consistent. It would not be approvable because it would be a cottage-style lots, so they'd have to come back with a new prelim potentially. Again, as I stated, if it's a reduction of lots but generally the same layout with the -- you know, the infrastructure still in the same location, they would not have to come back. It would be a substantially conformant prelim plat, because, basically, what they would do is they would take the individual lots, take out middle lot lines every other one, and combine instead of 22 lots, they'll probably end up with, like, 11 or 12 duplex lots, so they'll just consolidate where they can to -- to get this similar number of units on half the lots. Does that make sense? I don't know what it -- the math would work out to be, but the difference would just be the street would be in the same location, the infrastructure is all the same, and that's what would trigger a new prelim plat is if they move those items.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Or if the number of units --

MR. PALMER: If it goes up for --

MS. GEUEA JONES: -- goes up.

MR. PALMER: -- which it wouldn't be able to, so --

MS. GEUEA JONES: Yeah. Yeah.

MS. MACY: Which I just think that concern of the neighbors of single-family owned homes

versus rental duplexes was very loud and clear.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Yes. Understood.

MS. MACY: Thank you.

MS. ORTIZ: I have a question.

MS. GEUEA JONES: I'm sorry. Commissioner Ortiz, go ahead.

MS. ORTIZ: What was the problem with the duplexes?

MS. MACY: There was just -- when we discussed it, they were single-family owned homes. I don't have a problem with that, it's just wasn't anything that was ever presented to us as an option, but that could be something that would happen. And so when people are asked are these owner-occupied, home owned, or will there be apartments or what does that look like, they were single family owner occupied, and I think that's a difference in what the neighbors heard.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Williams?

MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. I just wanted to clarify. You mentioned a homeowners' meeting. Is there an HOA that your neighborhood has and I was just curious if you're here in some sort of representative capacity?

MS. MACY: No, I'm not representing -- other than what I heard at the neighborhood meeting that A Civil Group hosted, we do not have an HOA. When we talked about -- I asked a question about the retaining pond and how that might be maintained, that there would be an HOA with this group, which would be great. But, no, we are just individual homeowners that they invited to a community meeting to describe the process and make it clear as to what was going on.

MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.

MS. MACY: Thanks.

MR. PALMER: I can offer a little bit of info on that. I don't think we have a registered HOA or neighborhood association within 1,000 feet. They didn't -- it was not on our mailing list, so --

MS. MACY: Okay. That's good to know because I didn't think there were --

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any final questions for this speaker?

MR. ZENNER: One more point.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Mr. Zenner, yeah.

MR. ZENNER: One more point of clarification. As it relates to the request, should the zoning be approved, and should the plat be recommended for approval, if the neighborhood is desirous of single-family cottage-sized lots, you will have an opportunity to express that desire as a part of the Board of Adjustment action, and I would strongly suggest that if you are concerned that you will end up with duplex lots here, you come to the Board of Adjustment meeting and support the cottage standard approval, and that will assure then that -- or it would be greater assurance that you will have single-family home sites next to you. That is how this process all plays out. The reason we ask applicants to come forward with platting actions when we have R-2, and we ask them to hold neighborhood meetings is so you can be given some assurance of here is what is happening, because, historically, R-2 property is automatically

assumed to be used for duplex development. And what we are trying to arrest in this session is that that is actually the intent. But to fully facilitate that, you have to come and you have to do the next side of the public process and that makes sure our Board of Adjustment sees it from your perspective as neighbors, as well.

MS. MACY: Great. Thank you so much. I will make sure we let the neighbors know.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you very much for being here, Ms. Macy. Next speaker on this case, please come forward.

MR. MACY: Hi. Chris Macy of the same address. With regard to Commissioner Placier's question about the trees, I don't feel like we got the cool graphic like the other two got with the trees in the background and the three-dimensional view. But the comment that there was an offset or whatever the wording was, for the retention pond, that's not where the trees are. The trees are basically in the other portion of that property, so it looks like they would all probably -- or a good portion of it would come down. The other thing I think that was noted was that one of the bullets was that in the vicinity there is R-2 zone, but it's not on the screen, so I'm not sure what vicinity means, unless it's way to the north or many blocks away, because if you look at the neighborhood that surrounds that property, it's all single-family homes. So where is this vicinity that the R-2 is located?

MS. ORTIZ: It's on the screen.

MR. MACY: Where -- where is the R-2? Up there past --

MS. LOE: Actually, north of the middle school.

MR. MACY: Okay. And is that, like, the recent development that just happened?

MS. LOE: The orange in the graphic would be the R-2.

MR. PALMER: Yeah. So the -- the orange at the intersection is R-MF and then the middle yellow kind of hue is R-2.

MR. MACY: Okay. Okay. It's still kind of out of the way. And I think there was a comment about if the church goes away. I don't see the church going away anytime soon. So those are my comments.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Thank you. Any questions for this speaker? Seeing none. Thank you for being here tonight. Next, to speak on this case? Seeing none. We will close public comment.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

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

MR. STANTON: I'm trying to keep myself from being confused --

MS. GEUEA JONES: Uh-huh.

MR. STANTON: -- so I need everybody to help me out. The way I'm reading this is, he needs R-2 to do cottage standards single-family homes; is this correct? That's the reason R-2 is required so that he can make smaller homes closer. If we do not -- if we do not support the R-2 change, those that are supporters of single-family homes are shooting themselves in the foot. Right? Because then he could come back and do duplexes; am I correct? Okay. I was starting to get confused, so I wanted to clarify

that for me so everybody in the audience understands that. That if we -- he's doing this so that he can do cottage standards. That's why he needs R-2.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Right. Commissioner Williams, then Walters, then Placier. Commissioner Williams?

MR. WILLIAMS: So if we do not approve the change in the zoning to R-2, then he has R-1, and he would not be able to do duplexes, he would just be able to build whatever would fit within that property subject to the current lot size standards for an R-1. And so it would reduce the number of houses there presumably to some number that is less than what is proposed, but I couldn't tell you what that would be.

MS. GEUEA JONES: At 20, it sounds like. Between 18 and 20.

MR. PALMER: Yeah. I mean, if you use the lot standard for 7,000 square feet, I think it comes to, like, 25, but then you have to subtract out the street and the -- you know, any type of storm water like we have here. So it -- I should have done the math on that. I was pulling 25 as the number based on the lot size, and I was, like, it's not really indicative of what would actually be built there, so instead of confusing you guys even further, I decided not to put that in the report. But you're looking at 17, 18 houses is what will end up there in the R-1 because it will virtually be the same layout probably, just with the lot -- larger lot sizes.

MR. WILLIAMS: Is it fair to say that it would probably be two rows of houses that would mirror the lots there on Oakland Ridge Drive on the north side?

MR. PALMER: I don't really follow, but it would be the double-loaded Glorietta Drive with a lot on either side like it is now. They would -- they would just be generally wider lots. And I don't think it's a two for one exchange because the lots there are already -- a lot of them are already over that 7,000-square-foot threshold. So I think they will -- they will end up with more than half of what they have now. That's why I'm guessing 17 to 18 lots probably.

MR. WILLIAMS: I was just saying that the -- there's -- on the -- bordering this parcel, there is eight houses on Oakland Ridge Drive. And so using that as an approximate --

MR. PALMER: Yeah. And those lots are more along the lines of 10,000 square feet each, so those are a little larger than the minimum lot size, so they're -- they're a decent comparison, though.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Walters?

MR. WALTERS: I just wanted to follow up. I think I misinformed the speaker earlier in terms of the process. And tagging onto what Mr. Stanton just said and what Mr. Zenner just said, it's important that the homeowners show up for the Board of Adjustment meeting. And so, I had a question. So was he saying, is this process of notification the same for Board of Adjustments as it was for this? Will these people, say, receive notification for their Board of Adjustment?

MR. ZENNER: Yes, they will.

MR. WALTERS: Okay. So just to reinforce, the Board of Adjustment is critical if you want to see single-family detached homes here.

MR. ZENNER: The tentative Board of Adjustment date will be our July 8th Board of Adjustment

meeting. It's at 7:00 p.m. on a Tuesday, this same room.

MR. WALTERS: Okay.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Placier?

MS. PLACIER: Oh, I just wanted to agree that if we do not approve the R-2, it just remains R-1, and so it would be fewer -- fewer homes. And the R-2 purpose is for a cottage, but I also would point out that there is a demand for the smaller homes, although somebody in one of their letters cited a price point that wasn't all that low, but there is a demand.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Loe?

MS. LOE: Mr. Palmer, can you go to the preliminary plat?

MR. PALMER: Yeah. We'll get to that on the next one.

MS. LOE: Oh.

MR. PALMER: Do you need a visual of some kind?

MS. LOE: Yeah.

MR. PALMER: I don't know. What exactly are you trying to illustrate?

MS. LOE: The -- the lot layout, there is -- they've labeled the 20-foot building line, which is a setback from the front right-of-way, and they've labeled the utility easement line eight foot around the perimeter. And there's another dashed line between the two of those, which appears to be a rear building setback.

MR. PALMER: Uh-huh. Yeah. In the cottage, those are both ten, and they've electively made the -- I know the front one is 20. I think the rear is 15 on there. We can look at it when we get to the prelim plat, but --

MS. LOE: Right. My comment was going to be, it's been pulled in further on the south side of the site --

MR. PALMER: Yeah.

MS. LOE: -- so against the adjacent R-1 properties --

MR. PALMER: And you'll find also there's --

MS. LOE: -- we have a bigger setback --

MR. PALMER: -- there's an easement there that creates an even deeper easement --

MS. LOE: Uh-huh.

MR. PALMER: -- a deeper setback, so --

MS. LOE: So it's going to be more comparable to the R-1 setback than --

MR. PALMER: Yeah. And you'll see, too, that those lots that are mostly impacted by the easement end up being the ones that are 10,000-plus square feet in size, so they're -- they're really just standard lots with some narrower front yard setback and, you know, required rear yard. But the effect is that they have much deeper setbacks back there.

MS. LOE: Okay. So, yes. I'm a little premature --

MR. PALMER: No. You're correct.

MS. LOE: -- but I did just want to observe that there seems to be some sensitivities --

MR. PALMER: They do go hand in hand, so yeah.

MS. LOE: -- with how plat is being laid out with respect to the existing context.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Commissioner Ortiz?

MS. ORTIZ: I had a question, I think more for staff, too, but I think you mentioned, Pat, that you encouraged A Civil Group to hold a community meeting. I was curious what triggers that. Like, when does staff encourage folks to hold those types of meetings?

MR. ZENNER: Well, you know, generally when we hold concept reviews, we know where properties potentially are going to generate controversy and we advise, to the best of our ability, that applicants take care of possible controversies before they become a controversy at this body. And so, that's all discerned as it relates to the type of project that's being proposed. Increased densities have historically always generated that and, therefore, there is always the advice. Most of our seasoned consultancies already understand that, but we -- we reinforce that whenever necessary.

MS. ORTIZ: Understood. Thank you.

MS. GEUEA JONES: And I would just point out what I think Commissioner Stanton was getting at is that if this rezoning and platting go through and the Board of Adjustment does not hear community support, then we're looking at duplexes. And where it is now, I don't see that there's a huge increase given the platting action combined with the R-2 between where you would end up with R-1 density-wise, and the 23 that they're asking for, especially when I look at the surrounding neighborhoods and the spacing of those homes that are already pretty densely packed together even if they are larger homes, and so the lots are larger. So I -- I -- we used to do these as packages almost -- well, and -- and, yeah. We used to have to do all the cottages as PUDs. And then we started doing the platting and the rezoned as packages. And I think that that is a better representation of at least how I think about it when I'm look at rezone in order to do cottage, and I cannot wait for us to get done with our small-lot standards so we can be very clear about what people getting when they do their zoning actions. But that's my comment. Commissioner Williams?

MR. WILLIAMS: I just want to clarify that even if the Board of Adjustment -- we do R-2, and the Board of Adjustment doesn't approve it, it doesn't necessarily guarantee that there's going to be duplexes because they could still build the same single-family neighborhood in R-2 that they couldn't in R-1.

MS. GEUEA JONES: True.

MR. WILLIAMS: And that's really just going to be driven by market--

MS. GEUEA JONES: Yeah.

MR. WILLIAMS: -- considerations by the owner of the property. So I don't know that there's -- there's a direct path, but I do encourage attendance at the Board of Adjustments with the other Commissioners. And I just want to say publicly, I know a few meetings ago, we had one of these cottage neighborhoods proposed, and I was vocal in my desire to see a setback that would be equivalent to a single-family -- a standard single-family lot. And so I'm pleased to see that that was built into this plot to

help provide a more natural flow between the properties.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Any final Commissioner comments, and if not, would anyone like to make a motion? Commissioner Brodsky?

MR. BRODSKY: I make a motion to approve Case 167-2025 to approve the requested rezoning from R-1 to R-2.

MR. STANTON: Second.

MS. GEUEA JONES: Motion made by Commissioner Brodsky, seconded by Commissioner Stanton. Is there any discussion on the motion? Seeing none. Commissioner Williams, when you're ready, 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: It's 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, which is on the same property.