

**EAST BETHEL CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL JOINT WORK MEETING**

June 21, 2023

The East Bethel City Council met on June 21, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. for a Special Joint Work Meeting with the Planning Commission at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Lewis Brian Mundle
 Tim Miller Jim Smith

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
PRESENT: Glenn Terry Sharon Johnson
 Sherry Allenspach Joe Reiter

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
ABSENT: Tanner Balfany Gabriel Hanschen
 Randy Plaisance

ALSO PRESENT: Jack Davis, City Administrator

1.0 – Call to Order –Planning Commission Joint City Council Work Session

Johnson called the Joint Council and Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2.0 – Call to Order – East Bethel City Council

The June 21, 2023, City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Lewis at 6:30 p.m.

3.0 – Adopt Agenda

Mundle stated I'll make a motion to adopt tonight's agenda. Smith stated I'll second. Lewis asked any discussion? To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Lewis asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

Lewis gave a personal thank you on behalf of everyone on Coon Lake Beach to the East Bethel, Oak Grove, St. Francis, and Ham Lake firefighters for their great job in fighting the fire on Dogwood.

4.0 – Capstone Presentation – Proposed Concept Plan for the Redevelopment of the Viking Meadow Golf Course

Davis presented the staff report indicating Viking Meadows is an 18-hole public golf course located at the southeastern section of the Hwy 65/Viking Blvd intersection quadrant (see Attachment 1). The course was opened in 1984 and has been on the market for several years. This site is 170 acres +/- and is zoned with a combination of Mixed Use, R-1 and Rural Residential districts.

Davis stated Centra Homes approached the City in 2021 with an interest in purchasing this property for a residential development but did not exercise their final option of acquisition. Capstone Homes, a developer of residential communities, with headquarters in Ramsey, MN has signed a purchase agreement for this property and is proposing a residential development of up to 400 units at this location. Staff has met with Capstone representatives and they intend on seeking approvals necessary for the development of this property. Their schedule proposes to begin site work in January or February of 2024. This would be a privately financed project and Capstone is requesting no TIF or any other form of assistance from the City.

Davis indicated Capstone has requested the special meeting to brief the Planning Commission and City Council on the project in order to prepare and complete an official Concept Plan Application for approval at the June 27, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting and the July 11, 2023 City Council Meeting. Capstone's goal is to complete the site work and be able to commence housing construction by the summer of 2024.

Davis noted sketch plans, examples of local project in the north metro and an overview of their company will be provided at the special work meeting on June 21, 2023. Any information received from Capstone prior to the meeting will be forwarded as soon as it is received.

Davis recommended the Council and Planning Commission discussion and review item. Council and/or the Planning Commission may wish to comment on the draft concept plan proposal presented at this meeting.

Matt Barker, Capstone Homes, stated he worked with Capstone Homes and the land development team. He indicated they were looking for a conversation and feedback about the Viking Meadows project.

Mr. Barker indicated Capstone was in their 25th year of operation in the Twin Cities area and they were located in Ramsey. He stated while they were also in South Dakota and Wisconsin, their main focus was in the Twin Cities metro area. He noted that currently they were working in 12 different cities in different developments.

Mr. Barker stated when they get into the design or development, there was a lot going into it including researching the community, the neighborhood, and what the nature scape of the community was they would be developing into.

Mr. Barker showed an example of a large development they did in St. Michael. He noted they took a lot of time thinking about how they could take the natural features of the community and enhance them, and how they could use some of the regional amenities in the area. He indicated they also looked at how they could get into a site and what would be the first thing someone would see or experience as they came into a new development or community.

Mr. Barker stated they had also taken into consideration housing projects and the City's Comprehensive Plan as well as the marketplace they were working in. He noted they had taken some time to study East Bethel's Comprehensive Plan and he had also recently visited Coon Lake Beach. He noted the City of East Bethel had great amenities.

Mr. Barker understood the City wanted a full urban infrastructure such as sidewalks, neighborhood parks and streets that provided good access and interconnectivity, and they would keep that need in mind as they designed the site.

Steve Bono, Capstone Homes, stated before they started any kind of layout, they were going to use the natural amenities to create something special. He noted most of the buyers would be families with kids and they would need a lot of walkability and open spaces for a park(s). He stated they were going to put in a lot of thought as to how people would enter the site and having curved streets for character as well as to slow traffic down.

Mr. Barker presented a slide of their vision for Viking Meadows and explained what they were planning including a beautiful north entrance using the existing trees and green spaces. He indicated there would be an entrance off Viking Boulevard with enhanced landscaping which would lead to the two home areas. He stated there was approximately 50 acres of open space they were preserving in

this development also. He indicated there would be City park land with a community park along with some ponding features and forested areas. He noted there would be a trail connection also.

Mr. Barker stated they envisioned the park space that would capture some of the viewshed area as well as the natural amenities of the space around it, which would give the community a great place to come, gather, play, and enjoy time together. With respect to a trail, he indicated they would use some of the current golf cart pathways. He noted they would have a trail network with great connectivity.

Mundle asked if their trail would connect up to the City trail next door to this development. Mr. Barker responded he believed they could connect up to the regional trail in some way and it depended upon how the City wanted that connection point to work. He indicated it did provide some access to some of the commercial space as well and it was definitely worth considering.

Mundle stated he thought it was within the City's plans to have trail connect to each other, especially with large developments.

Reiter asked if they were considering finishing 289th. Mr. Barker responded there was an intention to connect to it, but they would not be finishing anything beyond the boundaries of the project right now.

Reiter asked if they were going to get the south section rezoned to R1. Mr. Barker responded they would need to have a conversation about that as it did fall right outside of the current Comprehensive Plan. He indicated their proposal would probably be a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and that would need to be addressed at some point.

Reiter asked if they had a proposed plat map. Mr. Barker responded right now they were just looking at a concept and wanted to get the Council's and Planning Commissioner's feedback so they could take that feedback and revise things as necessary before they come back with a plan.

Reiter asked if they had an estimate as to the number of vehicles. Mr. Barker responded the total home count right now was 350, but they had not done any traffic study at this point and that would be later as they got into the actual planning.

With respect to the park, Mr. Barker noted there would be some on-street parking and it would be a great recreational park space.

Reiter asked in the mixed use area, were they planning on having any commercial areas. Mr. Barker responded there would just be single-family homes there. He noted in the northwest corner, they would propose some commercial development.

An audience member asked if there would be enough parking in the driveways for a pickup or two cars. Mr. Barker responded they would be working within the City's zoning district guidelines, but they did plan on having three- and four-car garage options and room in the driveway for the parking of multiple vehicles.

Mundle asked if they were proposing to put a sidewalk on one side of the street. Mr. Barker responded that was correct.

Mundle asked if streetlights would be put in. Mr. Barker responded they would be put in.

Smith asked if this development would hook up to City sewer and water. Mr. Barker responded they did intend to be connected to City water, sewer, cable, etc.

Johnson asked if that would include the area on the far east/southeast section. Davis responded there was ample capacity in line size to handle that and from an engineering standpoint, that was not an issue. He noted at some point they might have to put in a lift station, but that would be the only thing that would need to be looked at; otherwise, there was adequate capacity to handle this entire area.

Terry asked if they would have multiple housing looks or would they make them all look uniform. Mr. Barker responded they had a clause in their own development process that prevented them from putting in the same elevation and home colors side by side, so that would be spread out and they would not see the exact same home with the exact same elevation next to each other at any point in the development.

An audience member asked if the development would be covered by a homeowner's association. Mr. Bono responded they might have a homeowner association(s). He indicated one of their goals was to be as far as possible from homeowner association(s), but because they were doing some enhanced landscaping and they had a desire to keep a little bit of architectural control as they developed the community, they would probably have a basic/minor HOA to ensure the landscaping was kept up and irrigated. He indicated the landscaping would be taken care of by the community. He noted the HOA would not be responsible for lawn mowing, snow removal, or some of other HOA involved aspects. He stated the HOA cost would be very low.

An audience member asked if the trails would be dirt trails or paved trails and would they be for bikes. Mr. Bono responded they still needed to have that discussion, but he believed they were probably going to look at a paved trail that would be accessible for people and bikers. He noted there might also be some handicapped accessibility component to the trail.

An audience member stated they lived on the south/southeast end of the development and asked how close would the homes be on the property line as they had 24 acres which they hunt. Mr. Barker responded they would follow the normal setback requirements and they would work with the City on that.

An audience member inquired about the proposed road which went through the entire development. He asked where it ended. Mr. Barker responded he did not put that information on the concept plan, but the road would extend and continue. He indicated there would probably also be some cul-de-sacs put in and they still needed to work with the City on that.

An audience member asked if there would be fire access roads with an in and out. Mr. Barker responded there would be multiple points for access.

Reiter believed the lower right corner would be a hard sell for a lot of people in the community if they switched that to R1 as there were people in that area with farms, animals, roosters, hunting, etc. and he wanted them to be aware of that. He noted a high-density development through a rural area would be very disruptive to the homeowners there. He also noted that adding a lot of cars to the County Road would cause a lot of traffic accidents also. Mr. Barker responded they already had discussions with staff on this and still needed to figure out what they needed to do in that area.

An audience member noted there would be approximately 600 cars and even if one person worked, that was 350 more cars in the morning going to work and coming back in the evening. She noted Highway 65 and Viking Boulevard was the most dangerous area in the State of Minnesota and she was concerned about adding that many cars and additional traffic. Mr. Barker responded this was something they would be studying as well. He indicated they would be doing a traffic study to see what the impacts would be.

Mr. Barker noted in the Liberty single-family homes areas, this was a new product to the market in the past several years. He noted these homes would meeting the needs of the first-time homebuyer or someone with a younger family looking for a home they could get into and afford. He noted there were a lot of ups and downs in the market right now so they wanted to make sure they created something that the market could handle. He noted a starter home these days was in the mid-\$300,000 and he believed they could get very close to that with this product. He noted these homes would have three to five bedrooms also.

Mr. Barker stated the homes in the Liberty area would be a bit smaller, but they wanted to create some additional recreational space in that neighborhood also to add more green space and provide a buffer around them as well. He indicated they were proposing some screening and other landscape enhancements that would help provide some privacy and protection from Highway 65.

Mr. Barker stated they were trying to meet the two-and-a-half units per acre density and in order to do that, they could not just do large single-family homes as that density would be much lower, especially with them having to leave 50 acres. So, this helped with the density and gave a little more opportunity for people getting more of a community neighborhood development.

Reiter asked what were the home prices for the Classic homes area. Mr. Barker responded the Classic area would have a variety of home values as they would have every type of product from a small two-story to a multi-level home that could be in the upper-\$300,000 or lower-\$400,000. He indicated someone could also build a nice premium home with three- or four-car garages, which could go into \$700,000 or \$800,000.

Lewis asked if any of the homes had basements. Mr. Barker responded these were slab on grade with no basements in the Liberty area. In the Classic area, there might be walkouts.

A member of the audience stated she was child conscious and questioned if they wanted a pond in the Liberty single-family homes area, where there would be young children. Mr. Barker responded that the ponds were required for stormwater.

A member of the audience asked if the ponds would be fenced in. Mr. Barker responded they do not put fencing around stormwater ponds as they needed to be accessible.

A member of the audience inquired about heating for the slab on grade. Mr. Barker responded he did not believe the homes would have in-floor heat.

A member of the audience inquired about storm shelters. Mr. Bono responded there were a couple of different aftermarket storm shelters people could purchase, but they were not building these now differently than they built residential apartments or townhomes who did not have them and they were slab on grade as well.

A member of the audience stated he had built a slab on grade home and his advice as someone who had been a contractor, was for salability. He noted his storm shelter had spray foam insulated. He asked if they would have a community storm shelter. Mr. Bono responded that the State Building Codes did not require a storm shelter and it was not even commonplace in Minnesota for a building slab on grade to have one.

A member of the audience stated he believed that in mobile home parks, a storm shelter was required. Mr. Bono responded he did not know that for sure. He noted there were options for buyers for a storm shelter, but most buyers were not asking for this. He stated if buyers were asking for them, they would be more proactive about offering them.

Mundle asked if they had done soil borings. Mr. Barker responded they had. Brian Crystal(?sp), representing Capstone Homes, noted they did a round of soil probes and that was how they came up with their buildable area and where it made the most sense to develop.

Mundle asked if they would be using the existing soils, or would they need to bring soil in. Mr. Crystal(?sp) responded the plan was to try and balance it on site as it was expensive to haul dirt in and out.

Mr. Barker stated they had done a lot of analysis and one of the areas they focused on was in figuring out where there was some usable sand in the development and where some of that flow was.

Reiter asked how deep the ponds would be. Mr. Crystal(?sp) responded they would typically max out at 8 to 10 feet with the one of the southwest corner being possibly a little deeper at 15 feet or so.

An audience member asked as they brought in 350 homes using water, how would that affect the water table for those in the southeast corner and those on the east side of Highway 65. Mr. Crystal(?sp) responded there was a County ditch that ran through the site and that was what controlled the water elevation. He noted the water level would remain the same.

An audience member asked how this would affect the water table. Lewis responded they were going to be supplied by City water and sewer, so it was not pumping out of the ground directly below.

Mundle asked if the City water supply was from a different aquifer from residential supplies. Davis responded it probably was as the City water supply was located a mile west. He indicated this should have no effect on the southeast corner with respect to private wells. He noted this would be all municipal water, pumped storage tank, and then gravity flowed back to the individual users.

An audience member inquired about homes farther north on Highway 65 and how dirty their water was. Mr. Barker responded with respect to this development, these homes would be connected to City water, there would be no effect on the regional area other than just drawing the existing water, which was already in the system and from that standpoint, there was no increased concern with the development on private water use.

Reiter asked on the lower right would those be runoff ponds. Mr. Crystal(?sp) responded the last westerly one would be. He explained they had not gone far enough into the design yet for the others, but they could potentially be water quality ponds on the far east property line.

Smith asked if the soil borings had turned up any contaminated soil with mercury in it. Mr. Barker responded they had on the golf course greens and they already had a plan in place to remove that contaminated soil from the site completely where it would be tested and cleaned.

Johnson noted a big concern was traffic and asked them to address how they had dealt with this concern in other developments and how it had worked out. Mr. Barker responded the traffic study was the key component that would help give them the guidance or guidelines for what would need to happen in a community to improve or change any negative impact of traffic as that traffic study was looked at by State standards. He noted they were setting up a system to follow the State standards on how the community had developed and then what impacts that had on the area around it. He indicated the environmental worksheet process would put together the environmental components which included the traffic study. He noted the study would be submitted to the State for review. He stated public would also get the change to comment and give input on that environmental worksheet.

Johnson asked in the 25 years they had been in business, what had been the biggest lessons they had learned for starting up a development and how had they overcome them. Mr. Barker responded that

one of the biggest lessons they had learned was the value of getting to know the community and the homeowners in the community. He indicated their goal was to come into a city and work with them and the community to create a neighborhood that would bring value and a positive impact to the community. He stated their company ran on humility, integrity, and excellence. He noted they had learned a lot about the different things in the market and what products worked and what did not work. He stated they focused hard on making sure the products they bring into the community were going to work.

Mr. Bono stated if the City had any feedback, that would help as it would make it more concise as they moved forward to the next steps.

Mundle asked when did they propose to have a preliminary plat with the streets and lots ready. Mr. Barker responded as soon as they got approval from the governing bodies about this concept. He believed July 11 was their final meeting on that regard. He noted their goal was to break ground on this the first of next year. He hoped to have the design nailed down within the next two to three months.

Mundle asked if they were going to do this development all at once or in phases. Mr. Barker responded they were anticipating it would be done in phases, possibly five or six development phases. He stated if they did this in six to seven years, that would be great, but it would depend on what the market allowed also. He noted the first phase would be focused on the park area and the homes around it and they would be moving out from there as they went through the rest of the development.

Mundle asked if they would have a ghost plat approved for the entire development. Mr. Barker responded the preliminary plat would be for the entire development and they would be doing phases of the plat as they went through. He hoped to have the entire preliminary plat approved this Fall and then put forth the first Final Plat the first of next year.

Johnson asked how difficult it would be to do a complex change for the southeast corner. Davis responded the Met Council would have to be on board with it, which would take longer and be a bit of work. He noted it could be done as they could make a justification that it tied into the other parts of the development. He noted this process would take two or three months to get completed.

Johnson asked if there was a Plan B if the Met Council did not approve it. Davis responded he could not speak for Capstone, but they might change the development some with possibly lower density.

5.0 Adjourn East Bethel Planning Commission

Reiter stated I'll make a motion to adjourn. Allenspach stated I'll second. To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Lewis asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

6.0 Adjourn East Bethel City Council

Mundle stated I'll make a motion to adjourn. Miller stated I'll second. To the motion, all in favor say aye. **All in favor.** Lewis asked any opposed? That motion passes. **Motion passes unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Submitted by:

Kathy Altman

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.