

EAST BETHEL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
March 17, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Wanda McLaurin, Sherry Allenspach, Glenn Terry, Tom Eich, Daryl Lawrence

ABSENT: Sharon Johnson, Jim Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Jack Davis, City Administrator
Stephanie Hanson, Community Development Director
Tim Harrington, City Council Liaison

1.0 Call to Order

Chair McLaurin called the Planning Commission regular meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2.0 Adopt Agenda

Commissioner Terry moved and Commissioner Lawrence seconded to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

3.0 Approve February 26, 2020 meeting minutes

Item 2.0 Adopt Agenda - Commissioner Allenspach noted the correct date of the meeting should be March 2, 2020, not March 17th in both the text and motion.

Commissioner Lawrence moved and Commissioner Allenspach seconded to adopt the February 26, 2020 regular meeting minutes with the noted amendments. Motion passed unanimously.

4.0 Public Hearing - Variance of Cul de Sac Length – Prairie Pines, 245th Avenue NE/Washington Street Carrington Development

Background Information:

The developer is requesting a variance to allow a cul-de-sac (CDS) length of 1,500 feet for the residential development known as Prairie Pines. City code Chapter 66, Article VI, Section 66-164 requires Cul-de-sacs to be no longer than 500 feet; therefore a variance is required to allow a CDS length of 1,500 feet.

On March 25, 2019, City Council approved the preliminary plat with the condition that the developer work with the City of Bethel to find a solution for the improvements needed to 245th Ave. As part of the approved plat, the new road through the development was proposed to connect to 243rd Ave. NE to the west in the City of Bethel.

After numerous discussions with the City of Bethel and East Bethel City Council it was been determined that 243rd Ave. NE will not be extended to the west to connect to the City of Bethel. On February 24, 2020, City Council approved the preliminary plat without the extension of 243rd Ave. NE to the west. Resolution 2020-10, approving the preliminary plat and the preliminary plat, was provided to the commissioners.

City staff, including the City Engineer, Public Works Manager and the Fire Chief, have reviewed the variance request and do not have any issues with the length of the CDS or the CDS becoming permanent.

Variance Criteria

Consideration of a variance requires the Planning Commission to consider a three-factor test for practical difficulties:

1. The developer would like to use the property in a practical way but cannot do so under the rules of the ordinance.

The developer is platting the property for a residential development. All lots meet City code requirements; however, because of the layout of the land and abutting properties, there are no options to connect the street.

2. The developer's proposal is due to circumstances unique to the property and was not caused by the developer.

When the developer first submitted the concept plan and preliminary plat, 243rd Ave. NE was shown to connect to the City of Bethel. After discussions with the City of Bethel and City Council, it's been determined that the City of Bethel does not want the developments to be linked by the street and there is no additional benefit to the City of East Bethel if it is connected or if it remains a permanent CDS.

3. The variance does not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

The property is surrounded by residential lots; is zoned properly for residential development and streets ending with a CDS are located throughout the City of East Bethel. A permanent CDS is common within residential developments when there are circumstances that limit the connection to abutting properties.

Commissioner Allenspach asked staff if "No Outlet" signage is required for cul de sacs? Ms. Hanson didn't know that it was a requirement, but a sign can be posted. Commissioner Allenspach recommended a sign be posted because this will be a long cul de sac. Ms. Hanson will pass this recommendation on to the City Engineer.

Chair McLaurin opened the public hearing at 7:07 pm.

Cory Klebs, 290 in Bethel (on the cul de sac) asked if 245th Ave. is going to be straightened out, fixed, and blacktopped? Chair McLaurin request Steve Strandland, the developer, address this question. Mr. Strandland stated East Bethel, Athens Township and himself are currently working on an agreement for 245th Ave. Ms. Hanson stated the road is going to be upgraded to asphalt. Mr. Strandland added that the driving surface will be moved south to the county line.

Hearing no more comments, the public hearing was closed at 7:10 pm.

Commissioner Lawrence asked what the budget implications will be for snow removal on such a long cul de sac and how does that factor into the budget for future fiscal years and how will these costs compare to a through street. Ms. Hanson said she wasn't sure how the impact was done, but that there is a Capital Improvement Plan that covers these types of costs. The Public Works Manager looked at this plan and did not believe there will be an issue with plowing. East Bethel maintenance staff are the people who plow 245th Ave. Jack Davis noted there will be a little increase in cost, but it will be minor compared to the whole snowplowing budget. Currently, the city plows 145 miles of road, so this cul de sac is a minimal addition.

Commissioner Terry asked if the reason for limiting cul de sac lengths are for fire safety purposes? If so, will this be creating issues if the road were blocked with no other access in or out? Ms. Hanson said she didn't know where the 500' comes from, it's just the length used across the board in all communities. Yes, it could be a safety issue, but when rural streets cannot go through it is up to the Fire Department to determine if there is adequate turnaround space in the cul de sac for emergency vehicles. Commissioner Terry asked what if the entrance to the cul de sac is blocked and fire vehicles cannot get through? Ms. Hanson said residents would be blocked in if the road was shut down at the one entrance point.

Commissioner Allenspach moved and Commissioner Eich seconded to recommend approval to City Council of the variance request with the conditions set forth in Resolution 2020-10 as presented by staff. Motion passed unanimously.

This item goes before City Council on March 23, 2020.

5.0 Final Plat – Prairie Pines, 245th Avenue NE/Washington St - Carrington Development

Background Information:

On February 24, 2020, City Council approved the preliminary plat known as Prairie Pines. The commissioners were given a copy of Resolution 2020-10, approving the preliminary plat.

The developer is required to meet all the conditions set forth in the resolution prior to filing the final plat with Anoka County.

Commissioners were given these items for review:

1. Resolution 20-XX, A Resolution Approving the Final Plat for Prairie Pines
2. Resolution 2020-10, A Resolution Approving the Preliminary Plat for Prairie Pines
3. Location Map
4. Prairie Pines Final Plat

Commissioner Lawrence moved and Commissioner Allenspach seconded to recommended to City Council approval of the final plat with the conditions set forth in resolution 2020-10. Motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Allenspach again noted her recommendation to post a “No Outlet” sign on 245th Ave.

This item goes before City Council on March 23, 2020.

Someone from the audience asked about the Final Plat having a line drawn through the wetlands for the 16 lots. Is that being noted as a wetland and owned by the developer? Ms. Hanson stated Lot 9 on the final plat will be left as a wetland.

6.0 Updates

Council Liaison Tim Harrington reported the following City Council actions:

- Council approved the IUP for keeping chickens at 20350 Jewell Street NE.
- Council approved text amendments to City Code for driveway access standards, detached accessory standards, prohibited parking, and fence regulations.
- There is a date change for the local Board of Appeals to May 4th to allow enough time for the County to have paperwork done for property values.
- Council approved Resolution 2020-12 Authorizing the Combination of Property for street and utility improvements for 18721 Hwy 65 – Ferrellgas.
- On March 16th Mayor Steve Voss made a declaration of the local state of emergency for the City of East Bethel. This gives the City the option of how meetings are held and possible reimbursements for extra costs incurred during the state of emergency.

Tentative Dates

- April 18th - pet clinic at the Ice Arena
- April 23rd - Townhall meeting
- April 25th - spring recycling day and Arbor Day tree planting
- April 27th - Board of Equalization and Taxation at City Hall

Commissioner Allenspach noted that the Cambia Hills’ open house for March 25th has been postponed to a future date to be determined.

7.0 Adjournment

Commissioner Lawrence moved and Commissioner Terry seconded to adjourn at 7:20 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by:
Gail Gessner

Recording Secretary