MEETING MINUTES
Planning Commission

October 4, 2022 – City Council Chambers with Webex Component

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

Chair Julie Oyster asked for a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was taken, and the following members were present: Mr. David Frea, Chair Julie Oyster, Mr. Michael Farnsworth, and Mr. Larry Titus. Mr. Jim Rauck was absent. Staff members present: Kyle Rauch, Development Director; Kim Shields, Community Development Manager; Dash Logan, Development Planner; Terry Barr, Development Planner; Terry Ellis, Development Assistant; Jesse Shamp, Frost Brown Todd; Tami Kelly, Clerk of Council; Kevin Koesters, Public Service Deputy Director; Josh Reinecke, Service Superintendent; Laura Scott, Planning and Zoning Coordinator; Christopher Hite, Jackson Township Fire Department.

Organizational Items:

Mr. Frea moved to excuse Mr. Jim Rauck from the meeting. Mr. Farnsworth seconded the motion, and it was approved 4-0. Chair Oyster asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 6th Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Titus moved to approve the minutes, Mr. Frea seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved 4-0.

New Items:

ITEM #1 - Courtyards at Mulberry Run- Preliminary Development Plan **PID # 202208040046**

Mr. Barr presented the Development Department's findings. He stated the proposal is for a Preliminary Development Plan for a 74-unit single family residential development on 24.588 acres located on White Road east of McDowell Road and west of I-71. He then stated that a 14.52-acre tract of land was annexed form Jackson Township in 1972 and that this was the Preliminary Development Plan to assess the concept and initial design and that an in-depth review would occur later during the rezoning, final development, and final engineering plan review. He the stated the next steps which include finalization of the annexation for the northern parcel, rezoning, final development plan review, and construction plan review.

Mr. Barr continued to state that the 24.588-acre development is broken into two sections, one north of White Road that is 10.627 acres and one south of White Road that is 13.961 acres.

Mr. Barr then stated that the northern section will consist of 40 units on lots approximately 54 feet by 128 feet and will have one proposed access off of McDowell Road across form Tatera Court. Proposed streets will be private and range

from 22 feet to 28 feet in width, with on-street parking permitted in the 28-foot-wide section of the road near the open space in reserve B where the pickleball and bocce ball courts are located. Mr. Barr mentioned that a 20-foot-wide emergency access point will connect the cul-de-sac to Jody Drive on the eastern side of the site. He stated that a 6-foot privacy fence is proposed along the northern and eastern side of the site along property lines with adjacent homes for screening and that a 4- to 6-foot-high mount is proposed along the rear of the proposed lots on White Road and portions of McDowell Road.

Mr. Barr continued to state that the southern section has 34 proposed lots on lots approximately 54 feet by 128 feet and will have one access point off White Road approximately 385 feet to the west of I-71. He noted that the roadway will be private and terminate in a court on the southern portion of the site and that a 20-foot-wide emergency access connection is proposed to Presley Drive. He continued by stating that the southern section will contain a clubhouse, pool, and bocce ball court and that clubhouse is proposed to be located in the northeastern portion along White Road and will have 6 head-in parking space, one of which is handicap. Mr. Barr stated that the applicant is proposing a crosswalk with a beacon on White Road near Keller Farms Park and that the final design is not reviewed during the preliminary development plan. He continued to state that the applicant has indicated that the crosswalk will have landscaped islands and signs to allow pedestrians to cross safely.

Mr. Barr then mentioned that 3.93 acres of open space are required to be provided to meet code and that the applicant has provided 4.623 acres of open space between the two sections. He then mentioned that the open space areas will contain amenities like pickleball, bocce ball courts, clubhouse and pool along with pathways and stormwater retention areas. He continues by noting that the GroveCity2050 Future Land Use Map designated the area for parks, open space, and preservation and that staff has had conversations about the open space on the north side being public and being added to Keller Farms Park along with other ways to increase the open space on the site.

Mr. Barr indicated that the applicant provided 7 different renderings of housing models with color palettes containing shades of white, brown, black, and blue along with stone options of reddish blue and light gray.

Mr. Barr concluded by stating that after review, the development department recommends Planning Commission make a recommendation to City Council of approval for the Preliminary Development Plan as submitted.

Mr. Jason Coffey, Epcon Communities, 500 Stonehenge Parkway, Dublin, OH, was available to answer questions along with others from the project team Mike Reeves, Kimley Horn, Todd Farris from Farris Planning, and Lisa Minklei with Epcon Communities.

Mr. Frea asked for an explanation on why the eastern access is to be emergency only on the northern parcel, as he believed it to be more appropriate as a through- roadway. Mr. Coffey replied that it came out of discussions with neighbors and what they'd like to see. Mr. Frea noted that he understood not connecting on the southern piece because it could become a raceway through to the high school.

Mr. Frea continued by asking if this would be a 55+ community. Mr. Coffey replied that this project would be age targeted and that Epcon's preference is not to restrict based on age. Mr. Coffey clarified that the floor plans and the open space areas and the passive use around our homes are not conducive to soccer goals and things you typically see around traditional single-family homes.

Mr. Frea asked if there would be two separate HOA's for the two separate parcels. Mr. Coffey said that would be a legal question, but that Epcon's preference would be one.

Mr. Frea mentioned concerns with line-of-sight onto White Road for the southern parcel, noting that it he felt it would be difficult to see traffic coming under the I-71 bridge as well as a little down the road coming over the hill. Mr. Coffey said the line-of-sight and sight distance would be studied to make sure that the entrance meets the appropriate standards.

Mr. Frea asked for clarification on the number of parking spaces for both the clubhouse on the southern parcel and around the bocce ball courts on the northern site, stating that both seem to be under-parked. If someone is going to have an event at the clubhouse that would seem to draw more and if these are private streets and they're not to the full 28 feet, he noted concerns about emergency vehicles being able to navigate around that.

Mr. Coffey responded that streets will be 28 feet wide with parking on one side. There will be dedicated spots for both the clubhouse and bocce courts and on-street parking for overflow parking for events.

Mr. Frea asked if Epcon was committing to 28-foot streets widths for all roads, on both sides of the development. Mike Reeves, Kimley Horn, 7965 North High Street, Suite 200, Columbus, OH, 43235, clarified that all roads on the southern site are 28 feet to allow on street parking on the non-fire hydrant side to meet code. On the north side, plans currently show 28 feet coming into the development, then narrowing to 22 feet around lots 3, 4 and 5 to help with traffic calming. Then there is bump -out parking similar to what is in Beulah Park development where you have small islands to help designate the parking, help soften the features, keep people slowing down. The 22-foot-wide streets are intended to help with landscaping and traffic calming.

Mr. Frea then called for a representative from Jackson Township Fire to comment on both of those issues- dropping to 22-foot-wide streets as well as that northern section having only an emergency pass through.

Lieutenant Christopher Hite, Jackson Township Fire Department handed out a picture is showing a ladder truck which is smaller than the ladder they're projected to have in the future parked in the middle of a street. He noted that the image shows a truck on a 22-foot-wide road that's under construction right now, and that it would be impossible to get around that truck with the outriggers and the pads down, noting that would be 19 feet wide. He noted Jackson Township Fire's preference for 26-foot-wide roads without parking on either side to give them the amount of area needed to get around the vehicles or get vehicles around the ladder that's set up.

Mr. Frea asked if he was saying a 28 foot with on street, one side parking is not adequate? Mr. Hite, replied for ladder operations, yes.

Chair Oyster asked with these homes being one and a half stories, many one and a bonus room, how often the ladder would be necessary. Mr. Hite replied that he can't predict how much, thankfully they don't have a lot of fires because people are safe. He further clarified that the 26 feet also helps when setting up fire engines. You need to have enough room on the side of the truck to attach your headers. If you're too close because you're moving close to the edge of the curb for guys to get around, you then your hose is going to kink up and then we're going to have some water slide issues and we're not going to put out the fire efficiently.

Mr. Titus asked how the Fire Department manages on existing roads such as those in Hoover Crossing and Pinnacle with on-street parking. Mr. Hite replied It's not a new issue, but it just seems to be more illuminated recently so we're trying to give people more time to fix things when it's on paper versus it already being built. Mr. Hite clarified that those developments can fit four or six cars in the driveway, so the streets are very rarely utilized for parking. He noted that the

Pinnacle Greens, with parking on both sides of the street, is horrendous for their crews. Then there are large trees, so if there were an incident, they would be at a great disadvantage to provide the public service that they want to.

Mr. Hite stated that they do special training with the trucks in the Greens because it is so difficult for a truck just to maneuver through there, let alone set up to fight fire. The new style of developments are posing great life safety issues for the Department and making it difficult to do their jobs effectively.

Mr. Frea asked if he had any comment on the emergency access on the northern parcel. Mr. Hite replied 'No' because it provides the 20-foot entrance in that appears sufficient.

Mr. Frea had one other comment that goes back to the GroveCity2050 planning process that call out these parcels for their future land use map as sites designated for parks, open space preservation, highlighting the importance of preserving natural features on this site and providing open space to serve residents. He noted that he felt the applicant provided a little open space with the green space in the stream basins and the pond, but he didn't believe this to be consistent with our future land use map as laid out in the GroveCity2050 process. Mr. Frea indicated that for this reason he would not be voting to recommend it to City Council.

Mr. Coffey replied that they've been working with staff on the north side to preserve where the retention basin is to create more of a park feel as opposed to any type of a wet feature with walking trails. Regarding the Fire Department's comments, they want to work with them. He clarified that the resident count in these developments is lower than a typical single-family development with kids and multiple cars. The two car garages can hold cars with space in the driveway, leading to little need for on-street parking leaving it open for any kind of event overflow.

Chair Oyster asked if there were any other questions from Planning Commission. She then asked about making the crosswalk a bridge to avoid the traffic altogether. Previously it was mentioned that there were sight line issues. If that's the case, we definitely want the safety above all. Mr. Coffey replied there's still some engineering we need to do to make sure that we don't put an intersection in place that's not safe, somewhere with a cross walk. He noted that the crosswalks they utilize in many other communities have flashing lights that come on and traffic does respond.

Chair Oyster asked if there were any other questions of Planning Commission.

Kim Shields, Community Development Manager responded to clarify some points that have been brought up. She reminded the Commission that, as was noted at the September meeting, there are ongoing discussions with Jackson Township Fire at an administrative level regarding road widths. Regarding GroveCity2050, the intent of identifying areas for open space on the Future Land Use Map was for areas where open space either does not exist or where it was felt the city could expand on existing recreational opportunities or preserve natural features in the area. It's not intended to be parcel specific. It's meant to be a guiding document and these sites being marked as 'preservation', by no means meant to say that there can be no development happening there. The intent was to call attention to the fact that this is an area that does not have a lot of public open space and that any development should provide additional open space and preserve the natural feature of the area.

Mr. Frea reiterated that he did not feel this plan has enough open space in it. The lots are narrow and small and long and there's a lot of houses put together in these parcels. The lots are smaller than those that surround them. He questioned why we wouldn't at least meet the neighborhood minimum of other lots in the area.

Mr. Titus noted that the existing homes in the area are not guided toward a 55 and over community. Those are full family homes. He sees this development geared toward empty nesters and those wanting a lower-maintenance lifestyle.

Mr. Frea indicated that that's why he asked if it was 55 and over in the HOA agreement. Because there's nothing to say these don't become single family homes with lots of young children.

Mr. Coffey said his take on it is that there will be zoning with floor plans, home styles, the HOA document that says what you can and can't do. A major component of Epcon's homes is an outside living area on the side of the home. And there's also community maintenance, hence the smaller yards. As a result, all the maintenance is done at the same time. A very uniform look throughout, from the landscaping, lot size, floor plans, amenities, everything about the passive use. A very different concept than a traditional single-family home. People are not allowed to build decks or swing sets. This is why the lots are smaller and the homes larger. Targeted as a lifestyle community rather than a single- family living community.

Chair Oyster asked Is there anyone from the community who would like to speak.

Mr. John Orban, 2386 Berry Hill Drive, noted concerns about the entrance and exit on the south side. He compared it to the entrance to his subdivision, Briarwood, and stated that given the traffic on White Road coming from 104, sometimes he has to turn left and go around the block to go right. And sometimes we have to do the same to go the opposite direction. Adding 74 condominiums is going to cause more traffic problems. There are already lights at McDowell and at Buckeye Parkway. With more vehicles we'll be stuck going in and out of our little community. He mentioned that older people may not use the open space as much and more parking would be better for people that want to downsize and consider a condo. He mentioned that due limited number of parking space that it does not leave much room for people to come visit or attend party at the clubhouse.

Mr. Coffey responded that there's more work to do on the traffic side on White Road and McDowell, especially with sight distances. The development will be age targeted, so the traffic is much lower.

Mr. Orban said he lives at the dead end of a street that GPS shows as an open street, so people pull into his driveway, to turn around. Also, the freeway traffic is very loud.

Mr. Titus responded that highway noise would be a marketing issue for the development, and that people that choose to buy a condo there, that's their concern, not yours.

Mr. Frea made a motion to add a stipulation that all streets be 28 feet wide.

Jesse Shamp, Legal Counsel, replied that the Commission can attach stipulations or conditions to an approval. We just need to have a second to the motion.

Mr. Coffey asked if the final development plan needed to come back to this board. He indicated that they are very early in this process and would appreciate an approval knowing that it does not guarantee a final development plan approval. He further noted that he would get more information to address the questions brought forward, and that he would appreciate a recommendation of approval today knowing that additional work is needed for the final development plan.

Chair Oyster stated they were waiting on a second on the amendment. After no second was made, Jesse Shamp, Legal Counsel, replied that the motion died for lack of a second, so now the Commission would entertain a motion on the proposal as presented.

Mr. Titus made the motion to recommend approval for the preliminary plan to City Council as submitted.

Mr. Farnsworth seconded the motion, and the item was approved 3- 1. Mr. Frea- no, Chair Oyster- yes, Mr. Farnsworth- yes, Mr. Titus- yes.

There being no additional discussion, Chair Oyster adjourned the meeting at 2:12 pm.

Terry Ellis, Development Assistant

Julie Oyster, Chair