

CITY OF REDMOND
INNOVATIVE HOUSING REVIEW PANEL
MEETING SUMMARY
December 15, 2008

NOTE: This summary is not a full transcription of the meeting.

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT: David Scott Meade (Chair), Vibhas Chandorkar (Vice Chair), Judd Black, Mike Evans, Robert Hall, Sue Petitpas (Alternate)

STAFF PRESENT: Sarah Stiteler, Senior Planner; Jeff Churchill, Associate Planner

The Innovative Housing Review Panel is appointed by the Mayor to evaluate proposals submitted under Redmond's Innovative Housing Program, as described in the Redmond Community Development Guide 20C.30.62.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was convened at 7:05pm with introductions.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Meade offered to serve as Chair. A motion was approved unanimously. Mr. Chandorkar offered to serve as Vice Chair. A motion was approved unanimously.

ROSEHILL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Description: 9-home residential development on 0.99 acres, arranged around a common open space and community building. Home sizes would range from about 1,638 square feet to 2,552 square feet.

Location: 7300 and 7306 132nd Avenue NE

Applicant: Yuval Sofer, YS Development

Project Team Present: Sally Roth, Johnston Architects

Staff Contacts: Sarah Stiteler / 425-556-2469 or Jeff Churchill / 425-556-2492

Applicant Presentation

Ms. Roth of Johnston Architects presented the project to the Review Panel. She began by giving an overview of the site context, followed by an overview of the site plan. She noted that the site is heavily wooded. She continued by presenting graphics of three-dimensional renderings of the proposal. Mr. Sofer, the applicant, focused his comments on sustainability and affordability. With respect to sustainability, he noted that the proposal would achieve at least 4-star BuiltGreen certification, and spoke to the long-term benefits of green buildings. With respect to affordability, he noted that the proposed homes are smaller than the average new construction home in Redmond, and said that the homes need to retain functionality despite being smaller. He estimated that, once built, the sales price range for the homes could be between \$550,000 and \$850,000. He said that there would be long term maintenance cost savings. He also said that his focus for this development was not only on the homes, but on the community lifestyle. To illustrate that point, he noted that the cars would be relatively far from the homes themselves.

In response to a question from Mr. Evans, Mr. Sofer said that he has considered providing the infrastructure for future photovoltaic systems, but noted that actually installing a system would be expensive, and that the estimated payback period is 15-20 years. He speculated that perhaps the whole community could support solar power for the community building, for example.

Further questions were held under after the public comment period and the staff report.

Public Comment

Five members of the public provided oral comment regarding this proposal.

Stephanie Aleshire

Ms. Aleshire, residing on 134th Avenue NE commented that she would have liked to receive the staff report earlier. She commented that the proposal did not complement the neighborhood: the neighborhood has no three-story homes and no ramps to parking garages. She commented that she wants to know what the homes will look like; to her, the homes seem antiseptic. She said she had heard that the homes could be cottages, and then that they would sell in the range of \$700,000. She commented that there are unsold homes across the street from the proposal.

Loucinda Anderson

Ms. Anderson, residing on 134th Avenue NE commented that she had heard that the proposal would be only cottages, limited to 1,200 square feet. She was appalled by the proposal. She said she believes in development, but objected to what she called trailer home trash. She commented that other cottage-like homes fit in better with the neighborhood, and said she did not like the garage proposal. She commented that there would be infrastructure like lights, sidewalks, and sewer provided as part of annexation. She commented that the homes look pre-fab, like something that would be built on Snoqualmie Ridge. She commented that other development concepts – even apartments – would fit in better. She said she wants development that ties in to the neighborhood.

Shelly Yee-Hinniger

Ms. Yee-Hinniger, residing at 7133 132nd Avenue NE commented that she did not see postings of this proposal and so called her Kirkland City Councilwoman, Jessica Greenway. She asked what is innovative and affordable about this proposal, and what is green about the proposal? She commented that 132nd Avenue NE is already a high-traffic street. She said that new developments in Issaquah designed similarly to this proposal were better in that they were self-contained.

Johanna Palmer

Ms. Palmer, residing at 12911 NE 128th Place, and speaking on behalf of her mother who owns property immediately north of the proposal, urged the Review Panel to take a close look at the Grass Lawn neighborhood standards. She also commented that she had looked-up the innovative housing standards and believed that the proposal did not conform to the standards in Redmond's zoning code.

Following Ms. Palmer's comments, Mr. Churchill clarified that, based on Ms. Palmer's testimony, he believed that Ms. Palmer had looked up the standards for the Residential Innovative (RIN) zone, a zone that is particular to the Willows/Rose Hill neighborhood, and has separate standards than those of the Innovative Housing Demonstration Program.

Kim Yates

Ms. Yates, residing at 13301 NE 75th Street commented that she owns the lot immediately east of the proposal site and that the developer's architect wrongly identified her property as a "buffer". Ms Yates stated further that she intends to develop it. She commented that there was no scale on the site plan and asked the Review Panel to investigate that. She commented that Innovative Housing proposals are supposed to include elements of innovation and affordability, and that Redmond needs affordable housing and this doesn't accomplish that. She said that the applicant told her and others that the development would be like the Conover Commons cottage development in Redmond. She commented that three-story homes are out of character in the neighborhood. She asked where in the proposal there was innovation in stormwater management. She calculated that allowing three additional homes was equal to a \$750,000 giveaway on the part of the City. Last, she commented that pre-annexation zoning was set in the mid-1990s and that R-6 was arrived at by compromise.

Staff Report

Mr. Churchill highlighted the main points of the written staff report for Rosehill Community Development. He began by reviewing the history and purpose of the Innovative Housing Demonstration Program. Then, he set forth staff's evaluation of the proposal with respect to the five goals of the ordinance.

With respect to diversity of housing supply and choice, Mr. Churchill noted that the site plan is the first of its kind in the Grass Lawn neighborhood, and that it de-emphasizes the automobile. He said that staff recommends that at least five of the homes qualify as “size-limited”, meaning that they could be no more than 1,900 square feet in size.

On affordability, Mr. Churchill noted that the homes are smaller than the typical single-family new construction home (3,100 square feet), and that because of that there would be a measure of “relative affordability” achieved. To increase the degree to which the proposal addresses affordability, he repeated staff’s recommendation to designate one unit as affordable.

Regarding design, he established that the sizes of homes in the vicinity of the proposal range from about 1,700 square feet to 3,000 square feet. He explained that staff believes the proposal addresses the concepts of variety and visual interest, orientation to the street, and having homes proportional to lot size – all of which are design standards of the Grass Lawn neighborhood.

Mr. Churchill explained that the applicant requests deviations in allowed density, setbacks, and road width. He explained that the density deviation allows more, smaller homes to be built. He said that reducing the north and east setbacks to five feet allows adequate area for common open space, and that reducing the road width reduces impervious surface area while meeting safety requirements.

Finally, on identifying future code amendments, Mr. Churchill said that further exploration of size-limited dwellings and below-grade parking for single-family developments would allow staff and the community to evaluate the wider use of these techniques.

Panel Questions and Discussion

Mr. Evans asked what the organizing principle behind the architecture is, and noted that he had concerns about the security of underground parking. He also asked about the definition of affordability, to which Ms. Stiteler responded.

Mr. Hall asked the name of the Issaquah development to which a member of the public referred. He also asked whether there would be a local improvement district in the annexation area. He asked everyone to keep an open mind about the look of the buildings, and suggested that the applicant consider collecting rainwater for harvesting.

Mr. Black asked the architect how the site would handle stormwater, and where a pond or vault would be located. The architect responded that the project would employ roof collection, swales, and xeriscaping. The applicant responded with conceptual ideas about the location of a vault. Mr. Black continued with questions about trees and parking. Mr. Sofer responded that he had completed an arborist’s report. Ms. Roth responded that the site had 18 parking spaces for residents and six for guests.

Mr. Black asked how the project fit into the neighborhood. Ms. Roth spoke to using a variety of roof forms and cladding materials, as well as the use of front porches as called for in Grass Lawn neighborhood design regulations. Mr. Sofer continued that it would be best to compare the proposal to what would be developed under traditional R-6 zoning.

Mr. Evans asked how banks view this proposal. Mr. Sofer commented that a small group opposes the Rose Hill Heights South annexation.

Mr. Meade said that everyone needs to take a look at new models of housing. He said there is local precedent for this kind of development in Grass Lawn. He wants to see more similar architecture in this proposal. He continued that he would like the applicant to explore orienting homes #1 and #9 more toward 132nd Avenue NE. He commented that six visitor parking spots are better than five, and asked that the applicant show how the parking area would be screened.

The Panel asked for the following pieces of information: a tree survey, impervious surface area calculations linked to the site plan, a landscape plan, a stormwater plan, pictures of structures with comparable roofs forms, and an explanation of what is innovative about the inside of the homes.

Announcements

Staff confirmed Review Panel member availability for continued discussion of this proposal on January 12, 2009 at 7pm.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.

O:\Innovative Housing\review panel\meeting summaries\2008-12-15 IHRP meeting summary.doc