

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
APRIL 14, 2015
7:00 P.M.

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Don Darby.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Carolyn Ghantous (arrived at 7:10 p.m.), Dave Okum, Richard Bauer, Marjorie Harlow, Marge Boice and Don Darby

Members Absent: Robert Diehl

Others Present: Anne McBride, City Planner; Don Shvegza, City Engineer; William McErlane, City Building Official

III. MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 10, 2015

Chairman Darby: At this time the Chair will accept the motion to approve the Minutes of our previous meeting of March 10, 2015.

Mrs. Boice: Move to adopt.

(Mr. Okum seconded the motion. The March 10, 2015 Minutes were adopted with five "aye" votes from the Planning Commission Members present and Mrs. Harlow abstaining as she was not present at the March 10th meeting.)

IV. REPORT ON COUNCIL

(Mrs. Harlow gave a summary report of the March 18th City of Springdale Council Meeting.)

V. CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Darby: Each of us have an email from Mr. Shasha indicating that they would not be present this evening to present Items "A" and "B" under Old Business. They are requesting that we table this until our next meeting.

Mrs. Boice: This would be the second table?

Chairman Darby: It would be the second table; the first table was somewhat requested by the Commission because of the numbers.

Mrs. Boice: So moved.

(Mr. Bauer seconded the motion. Item "A" under Old Business was tabled with six aye votes from the Planning Commission Members present.)

Chairman Darby: Same procedure for Item "B", would the Secretary please call the vote? (Mr. Bauer polled the Members and Item "B" under Old Business was also tabled with six aye votes from the Planning Commission Members present.)

VI. OLD BUSINESS

(No Old Business presented at this meeting.)

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

14 APRIL 2015

PAGE 2

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Chairman Darby: Conditional Use Permit at 11550 Century Boulevard for a Communication Tower.

Mrs. Harlow: They sent an email asking for a continuance until May.
(Mrs. Boice moved to table and Mrs. Harlow seconded the motion. Mr. Bauer called the vote and the item was tabled with six aye votes from the Planning Commission Members present.)

- B. Chairman Darby: Item "B" under New Business is GE Park.

Mr. Steve Dragon: I am with Vandercar, we are the applicant for this request. We also have with us tonight a representative of the owner of the subject property, Mr. Jim Volker with General Electric Activities Association is here to present the conditions under which they are looking to develop or sell the property for development.

Mr. Jim Volker: I am the Board President of G.E. Park which is the organization that owns the park. Over the last eight years, the running of the park maintenance has gotten to the point to where we just can't afford it anymore. We were losing money every year and about eight years, as you know, we put up the for sale sign. We had numerous developers come and make us offers and eventually it would fall through. We were trying to sell just thirty acres of the picnic area out front on 747, we were unable to find a developer there and then Vandercar made us an offer for the entire park. Last year we had a membership meeting with all the members and it was voted that we would go ahead and sell the entire park. That is a little background of how we got to where we are today.

Mr. Steve Dragon: We are here tonight to receive some preliminary feedback on the proposed development plan for G.E. Golf Course and Park. I was expecting to have electronic images available and I understand that there is a problem with the technology tonight; I don't have as much presentation materials that I would have liked but it shouldn't hold us back here tonight, hopefully you have all seen the plan in advance of the meeting. I would like to thank the Staff of the City of Springdale, including Mr. Parham, Ms. Russell and Mr. McErlane for their assistance, their time, attention and guidance as we have been reviewing the prospect of this development over the last several months, as we work through the evaluations and preliminary planning process for the development of the property. Vandercar began looking at this property as a potential development site about a year ago and we decided to move forward putting the property under agreement for purchase from GEEAA in August of last year. GEEAA owns about one hundred and ten acres of property in this location which I am sure you are aware is located at the southeast quadrant of the intersection of 747 and Crescentville. Over the last several months we have put additional land totally approximately five acres under agreement as well, to be incorporated into the development plan; that acreage is currently owned by Crossings in the Park 6. This is an undeveloped area of the property east of the condominium development that is in the area and generally used as a driving range currently. Over the subsequent several months, we have looked at a variety of concepts for the potential development of the property. We have investigated a number of possibilities and evaluated market demand for development in this location. We have looked at potential residential, office, retail and industrial uses and the concept plan that we have before you this evening represents the best most viable, most sustainable development opportunity for the property moving forward. As conceptually planned, the project that we have before you, which we have named Tri-County Commerce Park, provides sites for nine new buildings totaling approximately 1.4 million s.f. The buildings range in size from approximately 2,500 s.f. up to nearly 450,000 s.f. of building area. The buildings, as proposed would be of an attractive institutional grade of the type one might expect to find in a first class business park. The sites would be nicely landscaped and well maintained. The uses will be a mix of one and two story office, warehouse, showroom, light industrial and office warehouse flex space. As many of you are probably familiar

with the property, it is a great location and a beautiful site. There are a number of challenges associated with development of the property, the first being providing suitable access. The project, as planned will be served by three new internal public streets providing access to the site from two primary points of access along the existing public street system. The first being on Crescentville Road aligned with Transportation Way to the north and the second being on State Route 747, generally in the location of the existing access drive to the property today. In working preliminarily with City Staff, City Engineer and City Traffic Engineer, we believe that the chosen access points are located to best serve the development and to function optimally with the existing road system. The proposed internal street system has also been planned to provide the existing condominium development with much more suitable and safe ingress and egress beyond what it currently has today, which appears to be quite a bit substandard and we have heard from the condominium owners that is a significant concern of theirs. I think this project would help solve, to a great extent that concern. The second challenge in developing the property is the presence of two significant drainage courses that cross the property. The one in the north / south direction, which lies about six to eight hundred feet east of 747; and the second being Beaver Run Creek, which runs across the southerly portion of the property, east to west. The concept plan is currently laid out and attempts to minimize disturbance to the streams to the greatest extent practical and preserve the corridors for those drainage courses and stream areas. Probably the most significant challenge regarding development of this site is mitigating potential unfavorable effects on adjacent uses, in particular while the project is abutted on two sides by very similar commercial and industrial uses and on other sides by major interstate highway and a high volume rail line, the eastern boundary abuts a residential neighborhood and a portion of the western boundary of the project is adjacent to the existing condominium project. We believe the best way to reduce the potential negative impacts on those residential uses from things such as an unpleasant views or light or noise, is to provide a significant buffer yard in those areas to separate the proposed uses from the existing residential uses. Along the eastern boundary of the condominium project we have proposed a buffer yard averaging more than a hundred feet in width, in which screening and buffering will be provided through a combination of preservation of existing stands of mature trees and supplemented with new landscape materials, fencing and earthen mounds. In addition to the buffer yard width, there aren't any building sites proposed on that side of the new internal street so there is an additional existing sixty feet of separation between the condominium property and any of the proposed building sites. Along the eastern boundary of the project we have proposed a continuous buffer yard of one hundred feet in width, buffering and screening along this area will be provided through construction of a six to eight foot high earthen mound that will be installed as part of the first phase of the project. The toe of the mound will be kept twenty-five feet away from the property line, so twenty-five feet west of the eastern property line, such that the existing mature trees and vegetation along the property line will be preserved to provide screening and buffering. And substantial additional landscape material will be provided throughout the landscape mound area to provide additional enhanced screening and buffering from the proposed project to the residences to the east. We believe the Tri-County Commerce Park will provide substantial benefits to the City of Springdale and the surrounding communities. The project will put the property into a significantly more productive use, it will ensure long-term first class maintenance of the site. The development will dramatically increase the value of the property and will support sustainable employment opportunities for the City of Springdale, generating additional employment opportunities for residents and increase the economic amount of activity, it will help sustain existing businesses and support additional economic growth in the area. The development of the property is a first-class business park and will help maintain surrounding property values and will support the economic health and vitality of the area. We would welcome your questions and feedback on the concept plan.

(At this time Mr. McErlane, Anne McBride and Don Shvegza read their Staff comments.)

Chairman Darby: Typically at this time we would get into our Planning Commission discussion, however I want to deviate from that just a little bit, I know you folks didn't come here just to see our smiling faces. I sense that some of you may have some comments and since it is a concept discussion, I think it might be valuable for the developer and for the Commission Members to hear your thoughts because nothing is cast in stone at this time. What we are going to do is we are going to, for those who choose to, we are going to open up the microphone to you. Those of you who have favorable things to say, please do so and those of you who have some problems with what has been presented so far, please do so. As I said this is concept discussion and we can all benefit from your thoughts. Are there any folks who would like to speak at this time?

Mr. Ken Weartz: I live at 228 Edinburgh, Crossings at the Park. I guess you all know that when we moved in there we had greater plans than what has happened and it has been quite disturbing. I think with the addition of this development, I think we can get some of the things corrected from what we were promised when we purchased our property. The Board's concerns and I think many of the homeowners are concerned about the buffer zone, they are concerned about the road and we are also concerned about the creek and the pond that is east of our development. I have talked to the developers and we have met several times and we feel like they have a good development and they would make a nice neighbor for us. We do want to be able to cut down the noise from the highway and from the train. In addition to the noise we have an awful lot of dust that comes in; our people are not all that healthy, as we have aged and the dust is a health hazard. I thought if we could get that done and if we have six to eight feet, that is great but we should also have some evergreen trees within the area so that they will stay covered through the winter as well as the summer months. The creek definitely needs to be cleaned up, it is a real mess and I know the developer has plans to do that and we are pleased to hear that. The road, I am not sure how the road can be made easier for us, the concern I have is when we come out we make all of these big u-turns and that deters people from wanting to come to the community and it also makes it difficult for us to get out. 747, eight years ago was not a problem, today it is because I don't move my neck fast enough to see the traffic and I don't want to see any of our neighbors injured by exiting the community through 747. I would hope that maybe we could come in from 747, I know at one time there was a "no left turn" at that intersection where the park is and 747; so I think that would be a good idea. Exiting through Crescentville is, I think, the best thing for us. There is one problem as it sits today, when you go up to Crescentville you really can't see what is coming from the west; there needs to be much better clearance and a safer way to come out. Traffic there is not as bad as 747, but it is bad. With a wider exit road and maybe a wider part of Crescentville where cars can come and slow down before they turn into the community, that would be great. I think that is all I have; I do have some problems with the south part of the property but that is for another day.

Mr. Leo Norr: I live at 407 Lisbon Lane. I just noted your concern about the public road going into a private road and having trouble with the plowing. On the north end of that pond #3, which will be adjacent to their property, at one time there was supposed to be a road put in there. If it were put in, it would join a public road with the public road going perpendicular to it, so that they could do their plowing and we could just go onto the road from our private road and not have a conflict which you are talking about; that might be something for the developer to consider to put in that road that was never put in. It would give us an exit onto Crescentville Road and reduce the problem that you were talking about; something to consider since you were looking for ideas.

Mr. Tom Wall: I live at 401 Lisbon Lane. I appreciate the fact that we are living in a city like this where you have these type of meetings and people can come up and express their opinions and we can try to move forward with certain projects that benefit everybody. I was real involved with the PUD in 2003, unfortunately the developer's plans did not go quite as we had anticipated at that point and time. If they would have gone then we wouldn't have been here today. I know one of

the big concerns for a long time was just the ability to have traffic lights; in particular a traffic light on 747. I would like to know if there is going to be any consideration at all for something like that. This time around, I think the big thing in my opinion is traffic and the flow and I am concerned with the flow here with the number of people that will be added into the park general area because of the buildings and people moving around constantly. I think that getting out to Crescentville would be good and I am looking at this and where I live on 401 Lisbon, previously there was a plan to go east from where I live and do a little loop around where the current maintenance center is and we could have all exited right off onto Crescentville. I am not sure this plan addresses that, I haven't looked at it close enough because this is the first time I have seen it. I think traffic has to be one of the really major concerns. You have always done a great job with the fact that you want to keep trees here in the community, which I applaud you for. Water is a big concern but I know that you will take care of that. I think you will take care of all of the things that we need; again, the concern is for traffic and for lights. Thank you.

Mr. Steve Snider: I represent Keystone Senior Housing, who owns the parcel which is just south of what the proposed Building #4 and #9 is, just to the south of the driveway. It is this parcel that sits in front of the condominiums. A little bit of history, Keystone owns in excess of about seventy-five senior housing developments throughout the United States, primarily independent living and assisted living. They became involved in this development as a partner with the original developer, who I think most of the people here know, that didn't quite make in through the economy. It has already been alluded to that is why the property has ended up the way that it is and the condominiums not finished out, the land was not completed. I think Planning will back me up when I say that there was an original building approved and it is pretty much ready to be built for the assisted living facility on this parcel. There is another piece that they expected to do, it is a skilled nursing facility, you would know it as a nursing home for the balance of the land. They still have intentions of building the assisted living facility and they wanted to do that originally as part of the development. The whole development was intended to be for seniors which I think everybody would admit pretty much the condominium owners are considered seniors at this point; this was going to be an extension of that. They ended up with this land primarily in default when the original developer went bankrupt. They did build an identical sister facility to this called Renaissance West which is on the west side of Cincinnati and has done very well. They wanted to duplicate that here. They have had some hesitation because of the economy and also because of the way the development failed here. Things have changed in the economy and it is getting better and they intend to build this. They actually have plans to do it now, they have a local operator that they want to have as a partner with them in this development. To do that this new development came up and they had a number of concerns and they want to be a good neighbor to GEEAA, who needs to sell this property and do something about it. They want to be a good neighbor to Vandercar if Vandercar ends up doing what they are proposing here. They would just like to work something out so it could be a little more conducive to the environment that was originally planned which was an overall retirement community. It can't be what it was because I don't think anybody is going to develop the rest of the land for condos but it is still possible to have the assisted living facility and the nursing home. Again, the assisted living facility is already approved. I understand why Springdale wants this development and it would be a good development for Springdale, being in this business I understand that. The concerns that we have are ingress and egress and I am not familiar but I have gotten into this recently, I have been into this about two weeks, I am not familiar with what ingress and egress agreements are in place now, as far as the entrance to the condos, the planned entrance to the assisted living facility and the nursing home but we are concerned about that. We are concerned about the two buildings primarily Building #4 and #9 being so close to where we are, being industrial buildings and how that will affect the visibility of the business that Keystone intends to run there. We may have some issues with the other two buildings which are the larger ones by the Crescentville / 747 corner which is Building #3 and #8, especially is they have maximum heights of 75'. So

those are some of our concerns. We still feel like we can enhance this community and the condos especially completing the project that we intended to start in the first place when it all fell apart a few years back. We would like to sit down with Vandercar. It sounds like this project will probably move forward; I have been to enough of these meetings and I just have a feeling it is going to move forward, everybody wants a change and we would just like something that works for everybody.

Chairman Darby: It is my understanding that the representative of Vandercar plans to have numerous interactions with all of the stakeholders involved in this area. So, those of you who haven't had much information shared with you before, then that is coming. I notice that we have a number of elected officials here tonight, is there anyone that would like to speak?

Mr. Tom Vanover: I am a resident at 11982 Tavel Court. My front yard faces what is the tee box on the 3rd hole. I haven't seen what the plan would look like. I would echo the comments on traffic. I go back many, many years and I have learned firsthand on traffic and depending on what the occupants are, semi-tractor trailer traffic, stacking capacity on the site is an issue. Obviously from our world in Heritage Hill, the buffering is very imperative, as Mr. McErlane referenced "topographically challenged". I haven't seen or heard anything on the screening of the mechanicals or lighting. I have all the respect for you up there, I have sat in your seat and I know you will do a good job. Also, no opening, we have two dead-end streets, Casto and Albano, and that is imperative that those do not open up to the property. The neighborhood is challenged, traffic-wise and that would open up with noise and a whole lot of other issues that we don't want to see.

Mr. Jim Squires: I am a Councilman at Large here in the City of Springdale. The gentleman that spoke from Keystone, I have always been concerned about the residents that are there now. I would like to plead with the Commission and the new ownership to not forget these folks, they have been there for quite a while and they need some help and let's do what we can to make things good for everybody. I appreciate what these gentleman from Keystone said. These folks in these condominiums were dealt a pretty severe blow when the developer declared bankruptcy there and they were left out. Roads that can make their life a bit better should be seriously considered. I think that it can be done and I think it will be done to make them more at ease with what they have. I know that Council is very concerned about it; I see some fellow Council Members here and maybe they would prefer to say something about it. I don't want these people left out, include them in what we are doing here, this is a big development for the City of Springdale. It is a good one; let's keep it going and let's keep everybody involved and the more people who are involved the better it is going to be. Thank you.

Chairman Darby: There being no other individuals desiring to speak, thank you all for your comments and I can assure you that we are listening and now we will move to the session for our discussion.

Mrs. Boice: When our packets were delivered on Friday, and that gives us a full week-end and a day to go over what is presented to us, I went through that entire package a couple of times. My problem, right up front is the vagueness as to what is going into these buildings. I realize this is only a concept plan but there doesn't seem to be a hint of what might be there. I don't like to go back in time but many years ago there was another plan that came in, and I remembered that we were told they were going to have a high end anchor and their idea of a high end anchor store was K-mart. I am kind of just bouncing off of that, not trying to live in the past by any means but I just have great difficulty absorbing this when I don't have any idea as to what type of office, what type of building. I am hearing loading docks which could cause noise for the community so I just want to be up front and honest with you and let you know what my concerns are and I am going to need a lot more than what I have seen in this packet before I am really ready for some heavy discussion. Thank you.

Mr. Okum: I, too Mrs. Boice, did the same. I want to thank the residents for attending and being part of the process, I think that is really, really critical. At this point we didn't see a lot of opposition, based upon that there is favorable feelings with concerns and those are reasons that we are here. The process is lengthy, what happens here. This is conceptual and we still have preliminary plan review which is a formal presentation with a lot more detail. Those meetings can be lengthy and very intense. I think that this property is the most studied and the most controversial parcel in the City of Springdale in its history. As most of you know, I have been involved in the City of Springdale for too many years to count and am intimately familiar with this site from the beginning; I see Mr. Walls back there shaking his head because we bumped heads a bit. On the other hand, I think that the City has done its work, at least giving us a benchmark to work from. In regards to this site, there are a lot of questions to be asked. How is the traffic going to be handled? Mr. Shvegza indicated that there is required traffic study that is going to be required on the site. If improvements are necessary on 747 and on Crescentville, as a direct result of this then the burden is going to be placed on the developer to mitigate those issues. If that means widening traffic signals and so forth, then that will be addressed with the development. I don't think anyone wants people turning out onto 747 or Crescentville and being hit broadside by another car or a truck that is leaving the development. The developer, Vandercar, I believe did Oakley Station, and a lot of us who travel a bit are fairly familiar with the quality of the development there. We don't know what we have got here. We have in our packets the same thing that you see on the board. Based upon that I am a little bit concerned that we are a little bit heavy on the warehousing end and lighter on the office end, based upon what was submitted. Based upon the drawings with dock areas, I see Building #1, #2, #3 and Building #5 as warehouses and those are pretty significant buildings. I am just as concerned as Mr. Vanover how that is going to impact the residential character of the neighborhood. We also know that this site has a topography that is challenged, which means that the developer is going to need to make an enormous amount of movement of earth in order to get their buildings placed flat on those sites so that cars and trucks and transfers and so forth can enter and exit the development. That is sort of like building a golf tee on the magnitude of a million to have a flat surface for that building to go on. That is still yet to come and we are going to need to see a lot of three dimensional profiles in order to see how that impacts the residential neighborhoods, including the residents which are mostly here from the condominiums on the 747 side. There are three residents here from Heritage Hill and I am glad you are here, too. We need to see how those buildings are going to impact because if you build a six foot mound and the building is sitting at 75' above you, a six foot mound really doesn't do a lot of good. We have great Planners and a great Staff to support us in this. Those are my concerns as we go through the process of reviewing this. This is only concept review; I am excited about somebody interested in developing this site. I've seen phenomenal developments in this type of formula; I think this could be done very well but on the other hand we need to be cautious and look at it carefully. I am a little bit uneasy about the office / warehouse comparative but we will see how that goes as the development is presented.

Mrs. Harlow: I have more questions than comments. I wanted to know what the acreage of the condominium are as compared to the one hundred and ten acres of the GEEAA Park, does anyone have that information?

Mr. Steve Snider: Seventeen acres.

Mrs. Harlow: What is the acreage of the Keystone Senior housing property?

Mr. Steve Snider: Six acres.

Mrs. Harlow: Mr. Shvegza, I know that on the corner of Crescentville and 747 we are getting a Thornton's Gas Station in that area, how close is this proposed driveway that goes in here off of 747 to their turn to go into their driveway?

Mr. Shvezda: This is between the proposed driveway on 747 to Crescentville, I believe it is 800 feet. The entrance to Thornton's is roughly about 200 feet south of Crescentville, so about 600 feet.

Mrs. Harlow: I know that going east on Crescentville Road you have two lanes but it goes down to one lane right before Transportation Way, is that something that might be extended to this proposed road that might be going into the development?

Mr. Shvezda: Depending on what the traffic study shows. The original intent of that was to essentially terminate into the entrance, into the previous development entrance.

Mrs. Harlow: I share Mr. Okum's comments about Building #2. Could that building be shifted to the west, putting more parking on the east side of the building? But I know that we need to also be sure we buffer our residential zone there; I am not sure that will work either. I agree that there is an awful lot of warehouse space and an awful lot of docks and storage areas. Thank you.

Mr. Bauer: Ms. McBride, the information that you shared with us on the focus planning area, was that also shared with Vandercar?

Ms. McBride: Yes, they got a copy of our Staff reports.

Mr. Bauer: I guess I look at that as a document out of the master plan, correct?

Ms. McBride: Correct.

Mr. Bauer: Very worthwhile fourteen points that echo a lot of the comments that I heard from the other Planning Staff and something that I think we should pay attention to and look at a lot of those, if not all of them as we continue moving forward with the development plans. I am favorable for the development and I am glad to see someone wanting to develop in Springdale and developing that parcel. I do have some concerns. My first impression as I looked at this concept plan was concern for the residents, as a homeowner myself in Springdale. The condo area and Keystone parcels, it appeared to me that they were becoming an island in the sea of office space and concern for their access to and from their residences. Also the Heritage Hill residents and the large buildings along their side, since we don't know a whole lot of what is in there, how that would impact the noise and the traffic and those types of concerns, visibility from those things. Thirdly, the traffic studies as I have learned from my years on Planning Commission, it paves what we can or can't do. It gives a lot of good information about what needs to be done to allow people to traverse in and out of the neighborhood safely; it is a big concern that it is done safely for everybody, the business folks that will be in there. Thank you.

Chairman Darby: There being no other comments from Members at this time, one of the presenters said that they were pleased with how the City handles things; that is because you deserve it. Since I didn't create the model, I can brag about it. I think Ms. McBride can echo this, Springdale's process in this area, the whole planning process is the envy of many surrounding communities. We really go through things in an orderly manner and at the end everyone may not be totally pleased with the results but everyone knows that a lot of thought and a lot of discussion back and forth has gone into it. We thank you for coming out to share with us.

Mr. Steve Dragon: I would like to thank you for your time and for everyone that came out, I appreciate you coming out and taking an interest and I appreciate all of the feedback. We have a lot to digest here and I am sure we will be having more conversations in the future until we move forward. Thank you very much.

VIII. DISCUSSION

(No discussion presented.)

IX. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Darby: Under Chairman's report we had one sign approval, a wall sign at America's Best.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Boise moved to adjourn, Mr. Okum seconded and the City of Springdale Planning Commission meeting concluded at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

_____, 2015 _____
Don Darby, Chairman

_____, 2015 _____
Richard Bauer, Secretary