

The Wauchula Planning and Zoning Board met for its regular on Monday, April 17, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

The following members were present: Vice-Chairwoman Donna Steffens, Chairman Garry Phillips, Wayne Johnson and Ray Graham.

Also, present were Community Development Director Kyle Long, CRA Director Jessica Newman and City Clerk Stephanie Camacho.

Chairman Garry Phillips called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes – October 17, 2023

Steffens motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Johnson.

With no further discussion, Camacho polled the Board; all were in favor. Motion carried.

Diana Street Apartment Complex Discussion (Concept Plan)

Long addressed the Board and presented the potential development of an apartment complex. Long explained that, while this plan can be approved at staff level, the City was seeking guidance from the Board to see if there were any changes they would like to see made.

John Raymond – National Development

Raymond addressed the Board and gave a company background and work history in the southwest Florida area. Raymond explained the proposal of a 22-unit apartment building and presented a basic spec plan for the property which included 48 square foot patios with screening for each unit, recreation space and stormwater retention. Plans also included a sidewalk and additional space in front of the complex. The purpose of the additional space was to be determined, but could possibly be additional stormwater or a playground. Phillips asked what the recreational space would consist of. Raymond advised it depends on how much space there is. Raymond also stated that, for insurance purposes, this space would only be available to the residents of the complex and not for public use. Because code does not provide specifics regarding screening for the patios, Long asked the Board to give a recommendation on what type of screening they would suggest. Some options included screens, fencing or hedges. Graham asked if there was a tentative start date, if Commission approves the project. Raymond stated, once approved, it may be next year before the project would begin and could take between 10-15 months to complete, depending on supply and demand. Long asked the Board if they would like this discussion to be brought before them again once plans were complete. Steffens replied, yes.

No further discussion.

Ordinance 2023-01 Rezone for 0 Strickland Street (Seminole Park)

Marisa Barmby – Central Florida Regional Planning Counsel

Barmby addressed the Board and presented a staff report and proposed ordinance for a zoning amendment. Barmby presented photos and information about the City owned property known as Seminole Park. Barmby stated the property was currently zoned as public/semi-public (PSP) and the City was requesting to change that to single family residential/duplexes (R2). Barmby

went on to explain this is a 1.19-acre parcel. The property was a playground which had some equipment that appeared to be underutilized. Everything else around this property was zoned R2. Barmby also presented analysis information on the zoning impact of the proposed change and stated that, even though there is a potential for 9 dwellings to be constructed on the property, you may not get all 9 of them due to the way subdivision plans have to be laid out. Barmby went over the analysis for potable water and wastewater, traffic/transportation, environmental impacts and school impacts. Barmby also stated this zoning change is consistent with the City's comprehensive plan and the existing future land use. Barmby stated Jessica Newman was present to explain the City's plan for this site. Newman addressed the Board and explained the CRA works within most of the boundaries of the city limits of Wauchula. She also gave a brief overview of different types of projects the CRA can cover. Newman explained the CRA's In-Fill Housing Program stating it is basically when they take an empty piece of property and fill it with housing. Newman gave history of the program and highlighted their first completed home that was built and sold to a family. She explained there are certain criteria buyers have to meet which includes falling within a moderate-income range. For this home, Newman explained that, in order for the buyer to be able to purchase it, the CRA gave them a \$20,000 credit on the purchase amount. Phillips asked if the purpose of the credit was to prevent someone from buying the house just to flip it. Newman explained the credit came with a condition that the family would have to live in the home for at least 5 years, otherwise they would have to pay that money back to the CRA. She also presented designs for the next 3 homes the CRA plans to construct on other city owned properties which are all 3 bedroom/2 bathroom and around 1,300-1,400 square feet. The desire is to build homes that contribute to and enhance the neighborhood, that the homeowner and neighborhood can be proud of. Newman went on to explain that, specifically for the Seminole Park area, the CRA has not began planning the layouts of the homes. The intention is for 5 homes to eventually occupy that property in order to also have room for a yard and not be over crowded.

Troy Stone – Strickland Street area resident

Stone asked Newman if the designs she presented were the same kind of houses the CRA plans to construct on Strickland Street. Newman replied that they have not began design yet however it would be similar to that. She explained there are things they'll take into consideration to make sure the home designs fit in with the area around them. Stone stated the roads around this property are not in good condition and asked if the increased traffic will be using the current roads to access the homes. Newman explained the CRA has not reached that point yet to decide that. Stone commented that taxes would go up if they put in new roads. Newman replied that was not necessarily correct because of possible grant funds that could be received. Long stated the City has already received some funding from FDOT for certain roads to be improved within the next couple of years. Newman explained the road study the City had conducted which rated the roads in order of importance to be repaired and the City already has a plan in place to seek grant funding from FDOT.

Sherri Bryan – Strickland Street resident

Bryan stated she does not like the new construction idea. Bryan stated she did some research and was under the impression that the residents were required to notice of the ordinance 15

days in advance. Long responded, stating per code, the City was required to post a public notice in the newspaper 10 days prior to the hearing, as well as posting a notice on the property 7 days prior to the hearing. Long also stated there is a requirement to notice homeowners within a 500 foot radius, however there is no time table for that. Bryan stated she did not feel like the neighborhood had proper notification. Long also noted this is just a recommendation to the City Commission. He explained this process will likely take a few months and, if citizens choose to, they may make recommendation to the City Commission for approval or denial of the ordinance. Bryan then asked about fencing around the property, stating that she is unable to put a fence up around her yard due to the right of way. She asked if the new construction property would have to follow the same rules. Long stated any house built on the property would have to meet the same set back requirements, which all depends on where property lines lie. Bryan asked how this park was chosen for the In-Fill Housing program. Newman explained how the City evaluated all parks as part of the revitalization plan. She stated that, because the City already had projects going on at Farr Field, the City felt the best decision was to focus on enhancing that park as it is within walking distance from the Strickland Street area. Stone stated he was concerned about the additional traffic the new homes would bring to the area. Newman explained Hardee County is in need of affordable housing. She stated that, even though rezoning the property to R2 allows for duplexes, the City has no desire to build duplexes there. She also stated that, even though it was determined that 9 houses could fit on that property, the plan is to only build 5 houses. Steffens advised the public to stay on top of updates regarding this topic and go to all the meetings. She advised them their concerns would be heard and City Commission would make a decision that was best for everyone. Stone asked if there was a time table when the construction project would start. Newman stated there was no time table at this time. She said the CRA had several projects going on and those would need to be completed before they would start looking at this project. Steffens motioned to recommend approval of Ordinance 2023-01 Rezone of 0 Strickland Street, seconded by Johnson. With no further discussion, Camacho polled the Board; all were in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comment

There was no public present to comment on other topics.

Old/New Business

Long addressed the Board and gave an update on Crane Park (Melendy property). Long advised he was still in communications regarding this project and the plan was still to move forward with it.

Chairman Phillips adjourned the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

Chairman Garry Phillips

City Clerk Stephanie Camacho