



**Eldridge Planning and Zoning Commission
November 15, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Eldridge City Hall**

Minutes

The Eldridge Plan and Zone Commission met in open session in Eldridge City Hall at 6:00 p.m. on October 19, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Vice-Chairman Mike Martin. Present were Jennifer Vittorio, Dean Ferguson, Brad Merrick and Scott LaPlante. Karl Donaubauber was absent. Also present were Jeff Martens, Erin Gentz, Larry Schroeder, Jon Jay Ball, Sherrill Scott, Eric McAvan, Sarah McAvan, Linda Olson, Gary Olson, Joy Sherwood, Jim Perkins, Joe Stutting, Dawn Spring, Pam Niebur, Larry Niebur, Mandy Monroe, Dan Radke, Mike Frost, Chris Townsend, Colin Woods, Shane Edge, Wade Hamman and Jay Hintze.

The minutes from the October 17, 2024, meeting was presented for approval. Motion by LaPlante to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Vittorio. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Martin asked Martens to present the rezoning and planned residential overlay applications and preliminary plat for the Lancers Run Addition. Martens presented the items on the agenda. He stated that the two parcels known as 206 and 208 S. 5th Street are requested to be rezoned from R-1 and R-2 residential to R-3 Multiple Family Residential. He said the first thing the staff looks at in reviewing these requests is the City's Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map and these two parcels are designated as a future use of High Density Residential on that map. Martens let the visitors know what the process would be moving forward if the requests were approved at this meeting. He then presented the preliminary plat and defined what a Planned Residential Overlay District is. He let the commission know that the Planned Residential Overlay was used to allow a 20' front yard setback in the front yard of the fourplex condominiums to the west and allow a regular side yard setback on Lot 4 instead of considering it a double front yard frontage. He said that city staff and the City Engineer had reviewed the plat and found it to be substantially in accordance with city code and was recommending approval.

Martin asked the applicant if they had any comments to make and Stutting said that the school district had purchased this property so that the student build home program would have a place to construct affordable homes in the future. He said the school district was partnering with Diamond Builders on this project to have at least four years of building entry level homes available for their students. No apartments would be built here. They are hoping to provide homes for young families. Woods stated Diamond Builders would be doing the construction on the two-story

condominiums. They will all be single family attached homes. Stutting stated without multifamily homes the lots would be too expensive to develop. Stutting stated that single story ranches are all the students are allowed to build for safety reasons.

Martin opened the meeting up for comments from the public.

Dan Radke – said that this will bring too many cars and traffic into an area that is already congested. He said that a 6’ side lot was not enough and they should move things out and get some more space and come back with a renewed proposal.

Sherrill Scott – agreed with Radke. Asked if these were section 8. Woods replied no.

Jon Jay Ball - said that he would rather have a house than apartments in his backyard and he had eight trees that were dropping crap all over the place. He also said he wanted a fence back there as he doesn’t want kids running in his backyard. He said he lived next to the other two people who spoke, and they would all get the same damn crap and you don’t have to do that. He would rather have homes there so he could get together with the neighbors and enjoy themselves. He said if you have renters coming in there you have a different feel. Martens clarified to Ball these were not apartments and there would not be renters coming in. Ball said well put a house in there. He said you are showing three big buildings and you’re going to block us off. He said you’ll be plugging up the street. Martin and Woods confirmed all houses and condos will have garages. Ball then complained about rentals again.

Linda Olson – asked if the condos are one story or two story. Woods and Stutting confirmed the condos would be two stories just like most of the surrounding homes the visitors lived in, and the houses would be one story. She said they had the opportunity to provide patio homes for seniors to move into instead. She asked if they could think about single stories that Eldridge doesn’t have right now.

Mike Frost – would like single stories instead of two stories because that will be an infringement on his view after 30 years of looking out his back door. He asked about the price point. Woods replied they would like to be around \$300,000. Frost asked what square footage would be, and Woods replied approximately 2,000 square feet or 2,500 with finished basement. Frost said he would prefer that they were single level. Woods said the challenge with square footage here is getting the land cost to an affordable level home. Frost then asked about Air B&Bs and Martens let him know what state law is on that issue. Woods confirmed that he has no intention of renting these condos.

Kim Wilkins – said he had spoken with Martens and has met with other neighbors and has been in his house 34 years and most of them knew this would happen sooner or later. He is okay with it, but he assumed these would be one story. He knows traffic and parking will be an issue and City Council will probably have to address this. He doesn’t like it, but he is okay with it. He said that in speaking with Martens he knows that Iowa Law allows conditions, and he would like to see that happen so an apartment doesn’t get built here. Martens said the plan is tied to the PRO and the developer is tied to this plan. He then explained what a PRO is again in response to an inquiry from Wilkins. Wilkins thanked Martens for answering all their questions.

Pam Niebur – asked how many people could be living there. Woods and Stutting responded homes with children were trending down in statistics and they would average 2.5 people per unit. She expressed concern with the amount of traffic and wait times in the past of five minutes or more to back out of her driveway in the morning when she was working before she retired. She said that all these people trying to go to work will be a huge safety issue. She let people know about social media posts she had seen about this. She asked the number of students at the elementary and junior high schools which Stutting said was about 500 each and she said all those people were driving down 5th Street at the same time. Stutting said yes for 10 minutes in the morning and after school it was very congested. Niebur disagreed with this time estimate and Stutting said they had timed it. An argument ensued and Martens asked the visitors to speak one at a time.

Eric McAvan – said traffic is freaking horrible on Prairie Vista and during sporting events they can barely get one car down their street. His wife Sarah said she used to do day care and would take the kids inside after school because traffic was so bad on their street. Eric then stated he has watched people at night run the stop signs every night and even in the morning. Martens asked if they notified the police, and they said yes that the police sit out there but it continues after they are gone. Eric said 5th Street traffic absolutely sucks and now you want to add all these houses here and then try to get out there.

Larry Schoeder – is more concerned about the safety aspect. He said people start lining up at 2:30 p.m. at the schools. You are putting so many units in there even with 2.5 people per unit when you can't even get an emergency vehicle down 5th Street now. There is so much congestion it is not a good situation. He also did not like the dead ends either. He had concerns about the water runoff also. He expressed concerns about past high school construction. He said his sump pump runs for two days after it rains. He is concerned about safety more than anything.

Dawn Spring – the runoff is bad, and she thinks the water will run into her backyard. She questioned why this wasn't a cul de sac to help with run off and said the high-density population will add to congestion. She is concerned with safety of students and adding more cars will compound the situation.

Joy Sherwood – she is concerned about two stories and thinks it will look like they are stuffed in there and is also still concerned about the water. She doesn't see how this basin will stop it.

Chris Townsend, from Townsend Engineering, stated that they had shot this area and engineered it to contain every bit of the water on this site. They have run preliminary calculations on this and it will all have to be approved by the City Engineer. They work a lot in Eldridge and are familiar with the conditions of high ground water here. Stutting said they think they will make the water situation better in this area.

A man who did not state his name - complained about water from football area. He said the water would be twice what it was before. Townsend said if they didn't contain it would, but it would be but that is why they contain it. Commentor argued about this. Townend said they are making it better.

Jim Perkins – said this is a mosquito pit and ground water is so high that he thinks the detention pond will flood his back yard. He asked who maintains the pond. Townsend responded that the HOA will.

Shane Edge – said this will affect property values and perception is everything and this will definitely affect the traffic on 5th Street and said that he has had to yank his kids out of street at crosswalks to they don't get hit. He alleged that bus drivers are also offenders of this. He said the 5th Street and Prairie Vista intersection is already offset and dangerous and now this will add another intersection and crosswalk in an already dangerous area. He said people turning into here will be trapped and the crosswalks are dangerous. He said a few years back another development was proposed south of the Junior High School, and he thought that was turned down due to safety concerns. He said if that was a safety concern, then this is worse. He said this will bring mosquitoes and nuisance animals into the area with the detention pond on top of what is already there. He already has racoons, possums and skunks wandering into his yard. He worries about dogs, and this will also be an issue. He said car lights will shine directly into window of the backs of the houses next to the dead ends. He said when snow is plowed the snow will melt and go into the backyards of everyone on Valley Drive. Asked about runoff from the roofs of the four plex and how it will be contained. He said that there is only a setback of 10' from his backyard to the side of a four plex. He said he already has standing water 3"-4" deep in his yard for days after a heavy rain and his sump pump runs constantly. He said it has caused strife with neighbors and runs onto sidewalks and freezes during the winter. He said he was turned into the police for this. He said this development will exacerbate this. He doesn't understand the PRO and thinks it's a way to circumvent what otherwise would not be possible. He finds it frustrating that he only got four days' notice for this meeting. He incorrectly stated some information that Martens clarified.

Jim Perkins – questioned the notifications process and Martens clarified that information.

Wade Hamman – said he has water in an easement in his yard all year long. He said all this water is coming to him. Hamman asked about the number of people living there. Several people spoke at once and could not be understood.

Gary Olson – didn't have a problem when he thought they were one story. This is low priced housing that probably has people with kids, and they are 30' away from his backyard including the easement. They are going to be playing all over the place and that's not what he thought was happening. A few years after they are done playing in his backyard, they will be buying cars and mom and dad will have a car.

Linda Olson – the developer needs to make his money. Think about marketing to seniors, they don't need as much space.

Larry Schroeder – doesn't think this high-density residential area lines up with what the city wanted to put here. Martens asked if he was referring to the future use plan and Schroeder confirmed that he was. Martens pointed out to him on the future use map that the area was labeled as high density residential.

Martin closed the public comment portion of the meeting. He let people know the time and location of council meeting on Monday, November 18.

Martin asked for rezoning comments from the board.

Merrick asked Woods about four plex condos and asked if three single family homes would fit there and how much that would increase the home prices. Woods estimated \$60,000-\$70,000 increases in land costs per home. He said the infrastructure costs are divided up amongst the number homes there to reduce costs.

Martens reiterated that the recommendation of city staff is to approve the rezoning because it meets city code. He also said that since Iowa allows conditional rezoning that a recommendation not to allow apartment buildings on these parcels due to traffic concerns could be made.

Vittorio said she is in favor of affordable housing and the safety concerns could be addressed. She feels this will be an improvement and it will be a benefit to the homes around it. LaPlante said he is aware of the traffic concerns and is also in favor of affordable housing. He is concerned about it and thinks safety concerns need to be addressed. Merrick thinks safety is a concern and thinks additional crossing guards would help. He is in favor of affordable housing also. Ferguson is concerned about the water and traffic issues. He hopes the detention pond will do its job.

Merrick made a motion to recommend approval of the rezoning from R-1 and R-2 to R-3 and recommends a condition be added due to traffic concerns stating that an apartment building could not be built on this parcel. Ferguson seconded the motion. Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Martin expressed that the dead-end streets might be a potential problem with headlights shining into the backs of houses as the autos head north and south. He asked if the school and Woods address that with some kind of headlight blockers at the end of the streets. Woods said that landscaping had been discussed in those areas.

The commission discussed traffic and water concerns. Townsend said that the downspouts and sump pump mains will be connected directly to the detention pond as well as the storm sewers. He also spoke about the grading and said it will be sloped directly into the detention pond. He also addressed the fact that a cul de sac won't fit on the property.

LaPlante made a motion to recommend approval of the Preliminary Plat of Lancers Run Addition. Vittorio seconded the motion. Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Merrick made a motion to approve the Residential Overlay for Lancers Run Addition. Ferguson seconded the motion. Approved unanimously by voice vote.

Merrick made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Seconded by Ferguson. Approved unanimously by voice vote.