

MINUTES OF THE
Lone Tree Planning Commission Meeting
February 11, 2014

Lone Tree Civic Center

1. Attendance

In attendance were:

Martha Sippel, Vice-Chair and Secretary
Rhonda Carlson, Planning Commissioner
Gary Godden, Planning Commissioner
Dave Kirchner, Planning Commissioner
Stephen Mikolajczak, Planning Commissioner
Herb Steele, Planning Commissioner

Also in attendance from City staff were:
Steve Hebert, Community Development Director
Kelly First, Planning Manager
Jennifer Drybread, Senior Planner

Absent: Planning Commissioner Chair, Dave Sauder

2. Regular Meeting Call to Order

Vice-Chair Sippel called the meeting to order and noted there was a quorum.

3. Conflict of Interest

Commissioner Godden noted that he had a conflict of interest regarding the Site Improvement Plan on the agenda (Commonwealth Heights Multi-Family SIP # SP13-52R), and would excuse himself from the meeting during the hearing of that item.

4. Minutes of the January 28, 2013 Planning Commission Meeting

Commissioner Kirchner moved, and Commissioner Mikolajczak seconded, to approve the minutes. The motion passed with five affirmative votes.

5. Presentation - RidgeGate Update

Mr. Keith Simon, Development Director for Coventry Development, addressed the Commission and gave them an update on development that has occurred in

RidgeGate, as well as development that is planned for the future. He summarized the status of the RTD Light Rail Extension and the two funding options being pursued to accelerate the construction of the extension. He summarized the open space that has been dedicated as well as other lands that have been donated for public use including the Lone Tree Arts Center and various improved parks. He talked about the original objective of compact mixed-use development and the variety of residential neighborhoods. He noted the resulting balance of housing and jobs, given Sky Ridge Medical Center, the Charles Schwab campus and the various retail employers. He talked about the continued balance of jobs, housing and amenities in the build out of the West Village (West of I-25). Mr. Simon noted that there are currently 1350 residential units in RidgeGate, which should grow to a projected 2000 units by the end of 2015. He also indicated there are now 3,000 people employed within RidgeGate, which should grow to a projected 7,000 by the end of 2015. Mr. Simon also talked about the development and design standards administered by the developer, through the RidgeGate Design Review Committee. He estimated the West Village could build out in five to seven years.

Mr. Simon then talked about development in the East Village (east of I-25) and what it will take to help kick that off, such as a new corporate user or office campus.

Mr. Simon summarized the most current activity that will occur in 2014 including the expansion at the Sky Ridge Medical Center, the Charles Schwab campus and Embassy Suites. He also showed the Commission the three residential projects under construction in 2014, including Montecito, North Sky and the proposed Arcadia multi-family project in the Commonwealth Heights neighborhood. He then talked about what might happen with new retail including in Lincoln Commons north of Sky Ridge Avenue, as well as in RidgeGate Commons near the Cabela's store. He reviewed what RidgeGate is planning around the proposed Sky Ridge light rail stop, the previously approved Lauth Office Building project, the property east of the Lone Tree Recreation Center, and Tract GG which is slated for residential.

Mr. Simon discussed in more detail their work on planning for the East Village, including a build out forecast and fiscal study, infrastructure planning, the proposed City Center plan and future Sub-area Plans.

He then returned attention to the West Village to discuss the Lincoln Commons South area east of the Arts Center. He talked about the original plans for a mixed-use retail district and how the market has changed, including a loss of potential anchors, e.g. the library, less interest in retail at Lincoln Commons North, as well as market demand for other uses, e.g. senior residential uses. Mr. Simon talked about the neighborhood meetings they have held about a new vision for the area. He showed some charts and graphs describing a change in

projected housing demand and discussed plans to meet residential demand of the future, not just today.

Darryl Jones, Coventry Development, then showed the Commission a more detailed vision for the area east of the Arts Center, including a conceptual site plan and conceptual massing plan. He showed graphic simulations of views taken from the future street facing both east and west. He also showed a concept plan for plazas at the intersection of Commons Street and Sky Ridge Avenue and a more detailed concept plan for the park along the drainage area on the east side of the district. He then summarized some of the advantages of the new concept relative to the previously approved Sub-Area Plan, including activation of the land for development sooner, preservation of urban design principles, additional residential to support area retail, land for public use, and a reduction in traffic compared with the previous plan.

Commissioner Godden asked whether the potential higher education user would be the engine that starts development on the east side. Mr. Simon responded that it would be one of the engines, although it is a tax exempt entity, so they are also interested in other uses as well.

Commissioner Mikolajczak commented that he was very excited about the new plan for the area east of the Arts Center. He liked the interactive feel of the plan, with restaurants and the library, and felt that the new Schwab employees would use the area.

Commissioner Kirchner also reacted positively to both the proposed concepts for Lincoln Commons South as well as the East Village. Regarding Lincoln Commons, he commented that he liked the idea of mixing seniors with younger populations, rather than segregating seniors. He thanked Coventry for their detailed presentations.

Commissioner Steele said it was a very comprehensive presentation. He indicated that he was pleased to hear Mr. Simon say that the RidgeGate Parkway access to I-25 is now used almost as much as Lincoln Avenue and has moderated traffic on Lincoln Avenue more than expected. Commissioner Steele commented that the consideration of education on the east side will add to the "four-legged stool" by adding education the other three anchors in the City of financial, healthcare and retail. He asked about the nature of corporate interest the developer is seeing east of I-25. Mr. Simon indicated they are also considering high tech and insurance industries and agreed that they do not want to concentrate too much on any one particular industry. Commissioner Steele commented that having restaurant offerings around the Arts Center would be a plus and that, like Commissioner Kirchner, he liked the idea of mixing older and younger populations and activating the area at night.

Mr. Simon agreed and described the efforts they have made over the years to attract sit-down restaurants in the area. He has been very disappointed in the lack of interest. He is also aware of the City's efforts regarding the Entertainment District revitalization and is not interested in competing with that. He noted that restaurants and retail are very sensitive to access and visibility. Commissioner Steele noted that existing grocers like Target, Safeway and Sprouts will not face additional competition as no additional grocers are planned in the West Village. Mr. Simon indicated that additional grocers could possibly be located in the East Village.

Commissioner Carlson asked about the comment from Mr. Jones that the potential multi-family area in Lincoln Commons might become a different kind of use. Mr. Jones indicated they had been looking at some other concepts that might include an extension of townhome development, plazas and potential public uses. He indicated that concepts are still being evaluated.

6. Commonwealth Heights Multi-Family SIP # SP13-52R

Ms. Jennifer Drybread introduced the application as a request for approval of a Site Improvement Plan (SIP) for a four-story multi-family residential building consisting of 190 multi-family units and 8,210 square feet of ground floor retail on 3.25 acres. The property is located in RidgeGate, directly west of Miramont Apartments. She presented an overview of the request, the project location, key and key elements of the project.

Ms. Drybread indicated the project had been referred to out to various agencies including the RidgeGate West Village Community Association, which did not have any comments. She closed her presentation by indicating the project is in conformance with the Site Improvement Plan requirements of the Lone Tree City Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Code, RidgeGate Residential West Village Sub-Area plan and stated that staff recommends approval, subject to final approval by Public Works.

Ms. Lisa Evans, representing Arcadia Holdings at RidgeGate, the developer of the proposed project, introduced herself. She indicated that this is a project that would be built to accommodate condominiums or apartments and retail. She considers it a great infill site that will help complete the neighborhood. She talked about the RidgeGate Parkway façade and the quality of the living experience in that the units will be wider but shallower to maximize window exposure. She discussed the proposed secure parking, the clubhouse and other amenities in the building. She noted the proximity to adjacent uses and the opportunities to connect to the walkable neighborhood including the Charles Schwab campus, Sky Ridge Medical Center and the Arts Center. Ms. Evans mentioned briefly the urban, timeless feel of the architecture and the intent to create a lasting style.

Mr. Rich Muller, architect with EV Studio, addressed the Commission. He talked about how they thought about this project relative to its surroundings and said they took inspiration from some of the classic beautiful buildings in Lower Downtown Denver. He described in more detail some of the architectural renderings and the site plan. He described how the interior parking structure will work as well as each of the various levels. He discussed how they intend to accommodate snow storage in the garage.

Mr. John Olsen, landscape architect and Principal with EV Studio, talked about the landscape plan including the tree lawns around the building, wider sidewalks on Commonwealth and RidgeGate Parkway, and the locations of trees, grasses and other plant materials.

Commissioner Steele said he appreciated the presentation and the quality of the materials for review. He asked how the height of this project compared to the surrounding properties, to understand the compatibility of heights. Ms. Evans said this project will be very similar to the Miramont to the east and Regency to the south and will step up from the townhomes to the west. Ms. Evans and Mr. Muller clarified the proposed height. Commissioner Steele asked for a clarification on the secured access to the parking and how guests would access that parking. Ms. Evans indicated the lower level parking will be secured but the upper level parking in the courtyard will be available for guests and retail customers. Retail customers will also be able to park on the street. Commissioner Steele asked for a clarification on how many parking spaces will be onsite versus on-street to ensure that resident parking was not accounted for on the street. Ms. Evans confirmed that.

Commissioner Steele noted that a substantial proportion of the units will be one bedroom units and asked about that. Ms. Evans indicated they believe there will be a demand for these single bedroom units given the proximity to Charles Schwab and Sky Ridge Medical Center. She cited demographic trends referred to in the previous presentation and that this project fills a gap for urban professionals.

Commissioner Steele asked about how the retail spaces will be served. Mr. Muller described the interior service hallway and delivery area. Commissioner Steele asked where the closest residential units will be to the retail. Mr. Muller indicated there would be residential units immediately above the retail space. Commissioner Steele asked how the retail will be managed in a condo situation and if it will be for sale or for rent. Ms. Evans said the retail space is being designed to be sold. Commissioner Steele commented that there are often issues between HOAs and retail owners. Ms. Evans replied that she has experience with dealing with those issues successfully from other mixed-use projects she has been involved with.

Commissioner Steele asked for a clarification about the bike storage and parking, noting that there is a potential for residents to store bikes on balconies. Ms. Evans described the bike storage areas. Commissioner Steele asked about the provision of electrical charging stations. Ms. Evans said they considered that but are not including car charging stations but instead will be including a pet spa as an added amenity for residents. Commissioner Steele asked Mr. Jones who is responsible for snow plowing on RidgeGate Streets, noting concern for parked cars interfering with plow operations. Mr. Jones indicated it's a combination of contracts with the Rampart Range Metropolitan District or the City.

Vice-Chair Sippel suggested that there be no parking permitted on the south side of Halstead Lane in consideration of plowing the streets during snow storms. Mr. Hebert indicated that the City and RidgeGate are aware that parking demand will change over time and may need to be managed eventually. It will be monitored to see how it is being used, including parking for retail spaces in mixed-used buildings. Commissioner Sippel appreciated that the issue was being considered.

Commissioner Steele asked about the square footages of the units. Ms. Evans provided the breakdown based on number of bedrooms for each unit, ranging from 700 square feet up to 1350 square feet.

Commissioner Carlson asked if these units were going to be rentals or condos. Ms. Evans said the intent is that they will be condos for purchase and they are being designed as such. She indicated that she can only represent the design and that the parent company makes the final decision regarding product type. She said this is one of the few buildings in the entire metro area that is being designed for condominiums. Mr. Hebert commented on the construction defect litigation issues and the attempts by DRCOG and the state legislature to address the issue, which seems to be putting a damper on condo projects. Commissioner Carlson is pleased they are building to accommodate condos because she thinks there is a market for that kind of product. Commissioner Carlson asked if there was an option to possibly share parking with Charles Schwab for overflow parking. Mr. Hebert noted that while Charles Schwab owns the property to the north that is not a parcel they are developing right now.

Commissioner Kirchner said he appreciates the comprehensive presentation and was complimentary about the design of the project. He asked for clarification on the parking and how the non-controlled parking area would work. Ms. Evans described the parking reservation system, and how units are priced accordingly. Commissioner Kirchner commended the applicant for consideration of condominiums given the environment of construction defect litigation. He commended the applicant on the design of the project and indicated he likes look, scale and color of the project.

Commissioner Mikolajczak said he was also glad to learn this was a condominium project. He asked for clarification about the reference to a visual transition between this project and the Charles Schwab campus to the north. Ms. Evans described the intent to provide a “professional” aesthetic that communicated architecturally with the surrounding area. Commissioner Mikolajczak asked how the retail might be used and would there be a restaurant. Ms. Evans said it will more likely be a coffee and prepared sandwich shop and not a sit down restaurant. Commissioner Mikolajczak applauded the applicant for that kind of dining opportunity and liked the idea of outdoor seating along an attractive streetscape. Commissioner Mikolajczak said he is a fan of downtown Denver and this is the best representation of that character and thinks the applicant has done an excellent job of designing the project. He pointed out many of the architectural elements that he liked. He asked about if a central tower feature on the north façade would make the building more attractive and had the applicant considered that. Mr. Muller responded by showing the architectural renderings that show how you will see the building from the street and that increasing the façade at the location isn’t really necessary. He showed the corner elevation as an example. Commissioner Mikolajczak thanked the applicant for that response.

Vice-Chair Sippel asked if there is a potential restaurant, would there be enough parking. Ms. Evans said it is more likely to be a coffee and sandwich place used by residents or people within walking distance. Vice-Chair Sippel asked for a clarification on the material to be used on the RidgeGate Parkway landscape planters. Mr. Muller described the integrally colored, pour-in-place concrete design. Vice-Chair Sippel asked how durable the material will be in this climate. Mr. Muller indicated that nothing is maintenance free but these materials will not fall off like a stone or tile and is quite a sturdy material. Vice-Chair asked about the material for landscaped boxes. The applicant indicated the material is concrete also and is durable. Vice-Chair Sippel asked about the various surface paver materials to be used. Ms. Evans indicated they will be using the same pavers required by RidgeGate and how they will match that used along Commonwealth Street. Ms. Evans described the various materials to be used that were displayed on the materials sample board. Vice-Chair Sippel asked for a confirmation that the more “pinkish” materials were just accent pieces. The applicant confirmed that to be true.

Commissioner Steele said it was an attractive project. He reiterated concerns about on-street parking relative to snow removal. Commissioner Steele said that he was concerned that sometime in the future there will be a conflict between the residential and the retail. Ms. Evans indicated her experience has been that they will address the potential conflicts in their HOA or other related documents. Commissioner Steele also reiterated his concerns about bike storage on the balconies of the units. Ms. Evans indicated that storage of items on balconies is something typically addressed in covenants. She noted that a common barbeque grill, seating and dining area is provided within the project for residents.

Commissioner Mikolajczak moved to recommend approval to the City Council of the SIP as submitted subject to final approval by the City Public Works Department. Commissioner Kirchner seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 5 Commissioners present.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, Vice-Chair Sippel adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

These minutes have been reviewed and confirmed by

Martha Sippel (name), on 2/25/2014 (date)