

**MINUTES OF THE**  
Lone Tree Planning Commission Meeting  
February 25, 2014

**Lone Tree Civic Center**

**1. Attendance**

In attendance were:

Dave Sauder, Chair  
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

**2. Regular Meeting Call to Order**

Chair Sauder called the meeting to order and noted there was a quorum.

**3. Conflict of Interest**

There were not conflicts of interest stated.

**4. Minutes of the February 11, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting**

Commissioner Sippel moved, and Commissioner Steele seconded, to approve the minutes. The motion passed with six affirmative votes. Chair Sauder abstained due to absence at the February 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**5. Presentation – “Meeting the Aging Challenge” by Jayla Sanchez-Warren and Brad Calvert of the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)**

Ms. Jayla Sanchez-Warren, DRCOG’s Area Agency on Aging Director, discussed the role of the Area Agency on Aging in providing a range of services aimed at helping older adults remain in their homes and communities as long as

possible. She discussed the Agency's responsibilities including administration and implementation of programs; advocacy for older adults; serving as the regional planning entity; and, providing regional coordination of services and activities.

Mr. Brad Calvert, Senior Planner at DRCOG, discussed various demographic shifts occurring at the national, state and local levels. He showed several charts and graphs depicting growth in the older adult population throughout Colorado, Douglas County and the City of Lone Tree. He noted the population growth rate of Lone Tree from 2000 to 2010 was 110%. In that time period, he said the population growth of people aged 65 and older was 333%. He also showed a graph comparing population by age group for each of the metro area counties and several of the local municipalities, including Lone Tree. He showed a slide suggesting that the majority of the aging population in the County hopes to stay put and "age in place." He discussed that this might mean people will be looking for a different kind of housing type, including smaller homes and less maintenance.

Ms. Sanchez-Warren talked about what might happen as the older population ages and considerations regarding service delivery, housing opportunities, social activities, transportation, economic development, etc. She also reviewed results of a Housing and Transportation Opportunities survey they had conducted in Douglas County, including desires for a variety of housing options, affordable housing, ease of walking in the community and ease of bus travel. The survey also showed desires for fitness opportunities, affordable high quality food, preventive health care, affordable quality physical health care and affordable quality mental health care. The survey also revealed a desire for skill building or personal enrichment classes, employment opportunities, social events or activities, opportunities to participate in local government and opportunities to volunteer. Ms. Sanchez-Warren talked about the challenges we will face including the walkability of our communities, accessible and affordable housing.

Commissioner Mikolajczak asked about the reasons why Colorado has such a growing aging population. Ms. Sanchez-Warren and Mr. Calvert elaborated on the impact of the baby boom population in Colorado and how many people migrated to the state in the 1970's and decided to stay. Commissioner Mikolajczak also noted how important it is for physically healthy seniors to have social activities to stay engaged. Ms. Sanchez-Warren agreed and said that there is a dual role of the agency in addressing needs of people – both physically and socially.

Commissioner Kirchner asked if there has been any thought to redefining the age at which you are considered a senior, given that people are living longer and staying in the workforce longer. Ms. Sanchez-Warren noted that the Agency typically serves the 75 and older population anyway, as opposed to those

between ages 65-75. She said there have been some discussions at various levels about policy changes related to that issue.

Commissioner Steele asked Ms. Sanchez-Warren about tangible changes that the Planning Commission should be considering for the community and how those could be prioritized. He also asked how we might address the issue of loneliness and how to facilitate social connections in the community. He then asked about the issue of personal security. Mr. Calvert talked about the need to have that conversation at the local level. He talked about the Boomer Bond Assessment Tool DRCOG has developed and how it can help start that type of the conversation in the community and begin to identify needs and priorities. Commissioner Steele said he was struck by the earlier comment about how seniors buy more services than goods. Ms. Sanchez-Warren talked about the experiences in Lakewood and Manitou Springs and how conversations might occur with our retailers and other businesses about responding to the aging population, including preferred goods and services as well as accessibility to businesses.

Mr. Hebert asked about what they are seeing in the housing market and commented on what seems to be a growing demand by seniors in this area for smaller, ranch-style homes that are more affordable and require less maintenance. Ms. Sanchez-Warren noted that people who are just entering their later years do not yet see the value in planning for the future when they may not be able to use stairs, etc. and there is not yet a strong market. Commissioner Godden also noted that builders are notoriously slow to respond to demand. He sees that there are a few small, committed builders who are doing those types of communities but that many builders perceive a risk and are not taking advantage of the market demand that is there.

**6. RidgeGate Lincoln Commons Commercial/Mixed-Use Sub-Area Plan (amending and re-naming the RidgeGate Retail District West Sub-Area Plan) #SA14-03R**

Ms. Kelly First introduced the application to amend the RidgeGate Retail District Sub-Area Plan to be re-named the RidgeGate Lincoln Commons Commercial/Mixed-Use Sub-Area Plan. She noted that this is not an application to amend the Commercial Mixed-Use zoning designation. She summarized the role of the sub-area plans in the overall RidgeGate process, relative to the RidgeGate Planned Development District, which is the zoning document, and the more detailed Site Improvement Plans. Ms. First described the subject area, along with the adjacent uses and street network. She talked about the existing development that has occurred in the area, as well as some of the original planning concepts. She talked about how the planning concepts have changed over time and the desire of the applicant to depart from some of the original and very specific elements of the current Sub-Area Plan. She discussed the desire to

retain many of the original planning concepts in the existing plan, including the grid street pattern, streetscape design, walkable pedestrian network and public spaces. She summarized the nature of the specific changes to the document including the addition of building “step-back” standards to help reduce massing and provide additional sensitivity to existing residents in the area. She indicated that the application had been referred to the RidgeGate West Village Community Association, who had not provided comment to date. She referred to community meetings conducted by the applicant. She summarized that staff is recommending approval of the proposed amendments to the Sub-Area Plan.

Mr. Darryl Jones, of Coventry Development, addressed the Commission. He talked about the intent to amend the plan to take out some of the very specific site planning elements and to change the focus from a primarily retail project to a more mixed-use project, including residential. Mr. Jones talked about the challenges the developer has had attracting as much retail as originally hoped. He said they are responding to interest in senior housing and townhome type residential. He summarized the intent to omit some of the detail and amend the Sub-Area Plan to better respond to some of the projects that will be coming forward soon.

Commissioner Kirchner asked about the standard regarding metal halide lights and whether they had considered allowing LED lamps as well. Mr. Jones said they would consider other more sustainable lighting. Ms. First said that the language could be amended to address LED lighting as well. Commissioner Kirchner said he appreciated the standard prohibiting wood shake shingles. He said he was supportive of the flexibility of the proposed changes and believes it's a step in the right direction.

Commissioner Mikolajczak asked if there had been any engagement with the community and what the response has been from the community. Mr. Jones said they had three community meetings. The first meeting in July of 2012 consisted of a smaller group of residents, followed by a meeting of the broader RidgeGate community in September 2012, when a number of issues and concerns were raised including traffic and walkability. A third meeting was held in October and facilitated by an outside consultant. He said the attendees of that meeting generally supported the plan and discussed details that would be addressed through the SIP process. Mr. Mikolajczak asked if the library was a commitment and whether this new plan would actually come together or is it subject to change again. Mr. Jones indicated that RidgeGate is committed to donating land for the library but the actual location is still being negotiated. Commissioner Mikolajczak said he thought this would be a great location for the library and he hoped that a promenade connection could be designed between the library and the Arts Center. He felt there were opportunities to connect the courtyard plazas with surrounding uses and the senior living project. He is encouraged and hopes that it gets built as envisioned today. Mr. Jones stated

that they are keyed into the needs of the seniors and how that project fits in with the area.

Commissioner Carlson asked about a clarification on the percentage of residential area referenced in the staff report. Ms. First discussed the land area percentage limitations that are set up in the Planned Development zoning to ensure a balanced mix of uses within the planning Areas, such that no one use would dominate. Commissioner Carlson asked about how the calculation is determined and, given the projects being considered today, how much area would be used for residential? Ms. First responded that, as a conservative estimate, she assumed that even if all 15 acres of this southeast quadrant of Lincoln Commons were residential, it would only represent 27% of the total 55 acres in the planning area, and would not exceed the 30% residential limit set by the zoning. Commissioner Carlson shared her perception of the community meetings that she attended as a RidgeGate resident and said that the residents were not excited about more high density residential apartments. She indicated there was positive feedback about the library, the plaza and the walkability the developer had presented in the community meetings. She said another concern was the eventual height of the future senior housing project. She said that density and the lack of retail was what a lot of people were concerned about. She commented that we should be looking at future demand and not the difficulties associated with the past economy. She believes the market is changing and there will be greater viability of retail in the future, considering the number of Schwab employees that will be in the area.

Commissioner Steele asked about the significance of the asterisks on Figure 2, on page 11. Ms. First indicated the asterisks represent the concept of integrating public plazas and parks in those general areas of the plan. Commissioner Steele asked for a clarification about Figure 3 on Page 15. Ms. First indicated that it represents conceptual roadway alignments through the project. Commissioner Steele asked about the maximum height restrictions. Ms. First responded that the maximum height limitation in Lincoln Commons east of Commons is 70', or approximately 5 stories. Commissioner Steele said he is familiar with development standards like Floor Area Ratios, setbacks or density bonuses for such things as architectural upgrades. He said he wanted to register a concern about the potential for greater height and density with this residential plan, compared with a retail model, which tends to be lower profile buildings. Commissioner Steele commented that how in RidgeGate, it's a very fine balancing act between residential and retail. If there is more residential than retail, there will be more traffic moving outside of the community to retail services elsewhere. If there is more retail than residential, there will be inbound traffic in the community. Commissioner Steele said he was registering a concern that it not get out of balance. Mr. Jones responded that they still have additional retail opportunities on the west side, with three pad sites still available in Lincoln Commons. He noted that the success of retail depends on residential uses and activity during the day and in the evenings. Commissioner Steele asked if part of

the retail problem might have been that the SuperTarget was so large and that was affecting the other retail opportunities. Mr. Jones stated that they could have sold retail pads by now if they wanted to sell for uses like car washes etc. that are not necessarily representative of the values of RidgeGate and the mix of uses they would like to see. He talked about the challenges they have had marketing some of the retail, especially for the sit-down restaurant market. Mr. Jones said they look at retail that services not just RidgeGate residents, but that provides community-wide benefit as well. He noted that RidgeGate Commons, where Cabela's is located, was originally anticipated for office use, but has been converted to retail.

Commissioner Godden pointed out the need for edits on Page 37, Section 5.1.4, the second bullet. He also suggested changing the reference on page 41 from HardiPlank siding to a non-proprietary description such as fiber-cement siding. Commissioner Godden asked if there was a definition for the "multi-generational residential" term used in the submittal. Mr. Jones indicated that it implies the opportunity to "age in place" by having a variety of housing choices that capture multiple demographic categories ranging from more entry-level townhomes, to senior housing, to higher end housing. Commissioner Godden noted that if the senior living project comes in it will fill a current gap. He also received clarification that the concept for townhomes was a separate project from the senior living project. Mr. Jones added that an earlier concept for this area of Lincoln Common included multi-family apartments, but that type of housing here is no longer on the table. They are now considering that area as the possible site of the library.

Commissioner Sippel said she shared some of the concerns regarding lack of retail and sit-down restaurants and asked whether the senior living project precipitated the change in development plans. Mr. Jones replied that it did. She asked how the Sub-Area Plan meshes with the Arts Center. Mr. Jones said the Arts Center attendance will be supported with the new plan and that the plaza concept denotes a relationship with the Arts Center. Commissioner Sippel asked if there was pressure not to compete with Park Meadows Mall or the Entertainment District. Mr. Jones said the pressure comes from the market and said the competition of those two areas affects what they see in RidgeGate. Commissioner Sippel asked Mr. Jones what he thought the future was for retail in RidgeGate. Mr. Jones talked about the strength of the Cabela's store, which is far exceeding sales projections. He talked about the other retail and restaurant opportunities there were at RidgeGate Commons next to Cabela's. Commissioner Sippel said she wanted to go on record that she is concerned about too much residential and not enough retail. She suggested changing language on Page 5 of the Sub-Area Plan to broaden the intent to include more references to potential retail uses. She suggested that the second paragraph under Section 3.2 pertaining to synergy of uses be retained, rather than deleted.

Chair Sauder said he understood the need to clean up the Sub-Area Plan and make it less site-specific. However, he was concerned that it might be a little

premature and wondered whether we should wait for the Schwab campus to open to determine how it may influence the retail market. He said he was surprised the existing residential didn't feed the existing retail more. He said he thought the lunch business for existing restaurants will increase significantly.

Commissioner Steele said he thought there was a disconnect in using the term "village" to describe the area, as the retail there is strip retail, rather than a neighborhood-based concept. He believes the concept has not been fully developed to characterize it as a village.

Commissioner Carlson asked the Commissioners for their general feedback relative to the potential for apartments, and suggested taking a wait and see approach to evaluate what happens after Schwab opens. She said would be willing to consider recommending approval if there is a condition that there will be no multi-family other than the Morningstar senior living project. Commissioner Kirchner said he would not support that type of condition. He would be concerned about trying to force retail into an area that hasn't accepted retail and that such a condition would be too restrictive. He didn't believe the coming of Schwab was necessarily going to support more retail. He said the plan as proposed provides more flexibility and noted that a good portion of the area is already retail. If additional retail is not working, it should not be forced. He indicated he would support multi-family apartments.

Commissioner Mikolajczak said it was too bad the original plan did not happen and he would not be opposed to waiting a year and seeing what happens. He wasn't sure if you added more retail that Schwab employees would necessarily be enough to support that. He said his biggest concern was creating a positive environment around the Arts Center and what was being proposed had that potential. He also indicated he liked the idea of multi-family.

Commissioner Sippel asked Commissioner Carlson about her intent. Commissioner Carlson said she was trying to measure the level of support for a condition of approval that there wouldn't be any multi-family in the sub-area. She said such high density housing in this area was a concern by many in the community. Mr. Jones noted that the multi-family apartment idea was part of an earlier concept but that they are not in negotiations with anyone regarding apartments. He also indicated that the zoning does allow for that type of use and no change is being proposed to the zoning. Chair Sauder said excluding multi-family goes against the definition of mixed-use and he didn't think such a specific use restriction was appropriate for a sub-area plan.

Commissioner Steele said he accepted Commissioner Carlson's concern but couldn't support such a condition. He said he was concerned more generally about the area not coming together as a walkable community and that there was a lot of surface parking. He felt it was missing an integration of uses that would support a more walkable area. He indicated he was open to having a broad

palette of uses to work with and that he couldn't support a condition prohibiting multi-family.

Commissioner Godden said they should wait and see what happens with the SIP. He said it was unfortunate that the library bond issue was defeated and light rail hasn't come yet. It is unfortunate that some of the things we thought would happen haven't come together. He said he agreed with Commissioner Steele that there seems to be less cohesion happening than originally thought with the master plan, although he knows RidgeGate is trying to work toward that. He said the images presented imply a village feel but it's hard to tell until the project builds out.

Commissioner Sippel said she couldn't support the prohibition of multi-family but she was still concerned that things didn't come together as planned. She said she also understands that you need to have residential. She was concerned that some of the walkable aspect of the project seemed to be lost and hoped that there would be more forward-thinking regarding bike lanes and pedestrian connections.

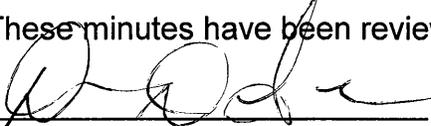
Commissioner Kirchner moved that the Commission recommend to City Council approval of RidgeGate Lincoln Commons C/MU Sub-Area Plan, Project #SA14-03R. Commissioner Godden seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4 to 3 with Commissioners Godden, Sippel, Mikolajczak and Kirchner voting in favor. Commissioners Carlson, Steele and Sauder voted no. Commissioner Carlson indicated she voted no because of the chance there could be more multi-family residential, although she appreciated efforts to preserve some of the original vision. Commissioner Steele indicate he voted no so that it goes on record that this was not a rousing endorsement of the plan. He felt there were enough concerns noted that the vote should reflect that. Chair Sauder said he felt the plan should wait and see if circumstances change. He indicated his vote was not for lack of support for the plan and he recognized the collaboration that had occurred but in his opinion it was premature.

Commissioner Steele asked staff whether a negative action on the Sub-Area Plan would impact the senior living project. Mr. Hebert responded that it possibly could, but that would be up to the Planning Commission and Council. Commissioner Steele commented that he had not heard anything negative about the Morningstar project. Mr. Hebert responded that it was not under consideration tonight, but that an SIP was expected soon.

## **7. Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Sauder adjourned the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

These minutes have been reviewed and confirmed by

 (name), on 3/11/14 (date)