MINUTES OF THE
Lone Tree Planning Commission Meeting
March 10, 2015

Lone Tree Civic Center

1. **Attendance**

In attendance were:

Martha Sippel, Chair
Rhonda Carlson, Planning Commissioner
Andrew Dodgen, Planning Commissioner
Roy Kline, Planning Commissioner
Herb Steele, Planning Commissioner
Stephen Mikolajczak, Planning Commissioner

Commissioner Kirchner's absence was excused.

Also in attendance from City staff were:
Kelly First, Community Development Director
Jennifer Drybread, Senior Planner
Hans Friedel, Planner

2. **Regular Meeting Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm with a quorum.

3. **Conflict of Interest**

Commissioner Dodgen recused himself from the Item 6, RidgeGate Section 15, Filing 21, 3rd Amendment (New Town Phase II) Project #SP15-07R discussion due to the potential perception of a conflict of interest as he is considering purchasing one of their townhomes.

4. **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

5. **Minutes of the January 27, 2015 Planning Commission meeting**

Commissioner Steele moved to approve the minutes, Commissioner Kline seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

6. **RidgeGate Section 15, Filing 21, 3rd Amendment (New Town Phase II) Project #SP15-07R**

Ms. Drybread introduced the agenda item. The site plan is proposed for 29 single-family attached townhomes on 1.83 acres in RidgeGate. The location is immediately west of New Town Phase I, due east of the future library, north of MorningStar at RidgeGate and south of Lincoln Commons mixed-use retail. She recounted how the building design for the proposed townhomes was previously approved by City Council for New Town Phase I. The proposed development conforms to the underlying RidgeGate PD 4th Amendment zoning. The property gently slopes downward to the north, and has been overlot graded. The site will be accessed from both Town Ridge Drive and Belvedere Lane. The application was reviewed and approved by DRC, staff, and was sent out on referral.

Staff findings were that the SIP was in conformance with the City Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, RidgeGate 4th Amendment PD, and Sub Area Plan.

Mr. Kevin Puccio presented on behalf of New Town Builders. He stated that he was excited about this being a continuation of the existing townhome neighborhood across the street. As a partner in New Town Builders, he continued that they pride themselves in being a green builder, leader in energy efficient design, and create products for a mix of income styles. The townhomes would be built to the US Department of Energy's exacting "Zero Energy Ready" specifications. He was also excited about the nearby diversity and mix of uses in the neighborhood – library, open space, retail, and restaurant.

The development would consist of 29 townhomes in 7 buildings, with two different product types – two-story courtyard row homes and three-story stacked townhomes. Mr. Puccio explained that the design was unique in that it focused on urban design and place-making, clean and contemporary architecture, and meeting a market need – providing housing choices for Lone Tree residents. Form followed function with the architecture due to a need for solar orientation. The townhomes would be alley-loaded and the public streets would be lined with front doors. The roofs would be pitched toward the southwest to pick up maximum solar radiation. The design also featured private and public open spaces. He presented the off-street parking, and landscape plan. He reiterated that there would be tree-lined streets with detached walkways and planter boxes to give an urban feel. The plan also includes pocket parks and public spaces. An overall goal was compatibility with the surrounding community in terms of neighborhood and walkability.

Mr. Puccio presented architectural renderings. He described the stacked units as having cars and living on the first floor (two or one car garages, laundry), people living on the second floor (open living/dining), and sleeping on the third floor for stacked units. On the courtyard units, there would be a detached two-car garage and private courtyard. The exterior is stucco, brick and Hardy Board lap siding.

Mr. Puccio concluded by stating that they love being in RidgeGate and Lone Tree due to a perceived fit with their core values of sustainability and energy efficiency, a community need for a diversity of housing options, and Lone Tree's high design standards. He emphasized that New Town was a respected Denver-area builder and this reputation was important to maintain.

Commissioner Carlson asked for clarification about whether the solar panels were optional or included. As an example, at Parkside in RidgeGate, solar was optional and some homeowners chose not to install it, creating an inconsistent look within the community. Mr. Puccio stated that solar is standard in Phase 1, but will be optional in Phase 2 because the solar energy market changes so much – he described it as a "solarcoaster." New Town will offer a variety of incentives and options to home buyers to encourage them to purchase or lease solar systems.

Commissioner Carlson also inquired about whether additional parallel parking would be available along the entire street. Mr. Puccio added that the street design on Belvedere Lane supported on-street parking only in areas where they depicted it in the plans.

Commissioner Carlson also inquired about whether additional parallel parking would be available along the entire street. Mr. Puccio added that the street design on Belvedere Lane supported on-street parking only in areas where they depicted it in the plans.

She also inquired if there were windows on the sides in addition to the front and back. Mr. Puccio replied that the windows are only on the front and back – but presented some actual interior photos of similar floorplans showing adequate interior lighting.

Commissioner Kline appreciated the design and inquired about the HOA maintenance of the landscaping – would it be the same HOA as New Town Phase I or a separate HOA. Mr. Puccio acknowledged the importance of the question but did not yet have an answer. He stated that they were considering options, as there was a balance between HOA size and responsiveness, keeping dues under $165 a month, and litigation risk mitigation.

Commissioner Kline inquired about what the maximum parapet height of the stacked units would be where they lined the streets. Mr. Puccio responded that the maximum height was right at 40 feet along the street. Commissioner Kline stated that it could be imposing along the street, and it would be great if the lower townhomes could be along the street by the Library as opposed to the stacked units. Mr. Puccio replied that they had the opposite sentiment – that having the stacked townhomes along the street contributed to a defined urban border to the streetscape. Also, they tried to minimize roof pitch to the minimum allowable where tiles would still work. He stated that the design was such that the majority of the solar arrays would be hidden from the street.

Mr. Kline asked if the accent metal was the same as the garage door border – he liked it when they match. Mr. Puccio stated they would match.

Commissioner Steele inquired if Mr. Puccio had reviewed the new library architectural plans. He was interested in whether New Town, the Library, and MorningStar were compatible in terms of landscaping, architectural design, and color palette. Mr. Puccio stated that he was fairly certain that New Town Phase II went through design review prior to the submittal of the library plans. Ms. Drybread interjected that the Rampart Range Metro District would do the landscaping on both sides of the street, it would be drought-tolerant landscaping, and would be compatible.

Commissioner Steele asked if there would be stair-stepping within the buildings to accommodate the slope of the property. Mr. Puccio stated that there would be stair-stepping within the buildings to accommodate grade. The largest building would be stepped twice, at a maximum of two-feet per step-interval to accommodate grade.

Commissioner Steele asked when Phase I would come to market. Mr. Puccio responded that he was hoping models would be open in April – with townhomes taking about seven months to build.

Commissioner Steele also asked about the square footage of the townhomes. Mr. Puccio stated that the largest units would be 1,848 square feet – and would also include a full basement which could be optionally finished by the buyer. The smallest units would approximate 1,100 square feet.

Commissioner Steele further inquired about the ongoing maintenance of the solar panels. Mr. Puccio replied that if leased, Solar City would have responsibility for the maintenance on the leased systems, with the HOA having responsibility to clean the solar panels twice per year – basically hosing them off. Leasing solar panels works something like leasing a car – the homeowner has the option at the end of the 20-year lease to take ownership of the solar system or have Solar City come take it off. They could also be upgraded to newer technology at this point.

Commissioner Mikolajczak raised additional concerns relative to maintenance responsibilities of solar panels in attached townhomes in a shared HOA environment. Mr. Puccio reiterated that the HOA would be responsible for exterior maintenance, and the lessor (Solar City) would be responsible for the maintenance of the solar array itself.

Commissioner Mikolajczak asked if there would be tank-less hot water throughout the development. There was discussion on whether solar and tank-less hot water systems should be optional or standard. Mr. Puccio responded

that if they are required as part of the US Department of Energy's "Zero Energy Ready" requirements, then they will keep them, if not they maybe optional.

Commissioner Mikolajczak stated that anything that New Town could do to encourage buyers to get solar and tank-less systems would be appreciated as it set an example for energy sustainability. He encouraged them to discuss with prospective buyers the future value of paying a little more up front to save money over time and essentially value engineer the home. Mr. Puccio did not believe that any community in Colorado had adopted zero energy ready standards yet. He said that many were budget conscious and also discussed the paradox of choice – many people did not select the energy efficient options. He said the best way to encourage this is to make these energy-efficient features standard; however, they had to keep the units affordable.

Commissioner Mikolajczak inquired as to the character and substance of the City Council's conditions of approval for New Town Phase I. Mr. Puccio replied that they were cosmetic in nature.

Commissioner Mikolajczak asked if they could construct an indentation on the street for cars to pull into to access mail at the community mailboxes – to avoid traffic jams. Mr. Puccio stated that the mail kiosk was depicted as adjacent to off-street parking. It was not designed as a drive-by mail access.

Commissioner Mikolajczak asked about compatibility of the retaining wall between Phase I and II. Mr. Puccio replied that they would be substantially the same.

Commissioner Mikolajczak asked if some trees were rendered in the middle of sidewalks. Mr. Puccio stated that they will be located within the tree lawn.

Commissioner Mikolajczak inquired as to the color of the bike racks and benches – he believed they were metallic silver – and would this be the same as in Phase I. He also asked if handrails would be a coated black, as opposed to metallic silver. He felt that the handrails, bike racks, and street furniture should have the same finish. Mr. Puccio stated that this was consistent with Phase I, as was also confirmed by Ms. Drybread. Where there were retaining walls or steps in the sidewalk, the rails would be coated black like in Phase I.

Commissioner Mikolajczak also inquired about whether the Hardy Board was colored all the way through, or just colored on the surface. Mr. Puccio explained that cementitious siding such as Hardy Board does not decay and rot as quickly as wood. They do not use pre-painted product since the approved SIP shows so many detailed and nuanced colors. New Town would rather just paint the product themselves on site to better match the SIP.

Chair Sippel inquired as to whether the solar panels on the front elevations would match the rooflines. Mr. Puccio stated that the panels would be aligned with the eaves of the rooflines as much as possible.

Commissioner Mikolajczak added that he was excited about this product as it provided a departure from typical Lone Tree residential development.

Commissioner Steele moved that RidgeGate Section 15, Filing 21, 3rd Amendment (New Town Phase II) Project #SP15-07R be recommended for approval, Commissioner Kline seconded, and the motion passed unanimously – excluding Commissioner Dodgen's vote as he had previously recused himself from the agenda item.

7. City of Lone Tree Comprehensive Plan update discussion, Project #MI14-07

Ms. Drybread presented a staff recommendation that the Planning Commission and City Council include the Freshfields property, located to the south of the current Lone Tree Planning and Urban Growth Area boundary and east of Interstate 25, within the Planning and Urban Growth Area boundary on the future General Land Use Map. This would occur as part of the Comprehensive Plan update.

This would bring the future General Land Use map into conformance with the text of the proposed Comprehensive Plan policy which calls for a buffer between the urbanization of the City of Castle Pines to the south and the City of Lone Tree to the north. The Freshfields land is all under single ownership. She emphasized that this was not a commercial land grab, but rather to preserve the perception of a buffer between Lone Tree and urbanization further south. She stated that the topography was variable, and if it couldn't be preserved as open space, at least it could be planned for clustered, low-density residential development out of site of the I-25 viewshed.

She read a proposed policy and objective that would support the addition to the Planning and Urban Growth area. This language is similar to what currently exists in the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Kline asked if there was a recommended density unit for this area. Ms. Drybread replied that it would be one unit per acre or less.

Commissioner Steele sought clarification on whether this property was inside or outside the city limits. Ms. Drybread replied that it was currently within unincorporated Douglas County and zoned as Agriculture 1, which restricts residential development density to one 1 dwelling unit per 35 acres. She clarified that in the future if the annexation does occur, the annexation and the zoning applications would be processed concurrently.

Commissioner Steele asked whether the property was in the City of Castle Pines future planning and urban growth area. Ms. Drybread stated that she spoke with the Castle Pines planner, and he confirmed that it was not within their future planning and urban growth area.

Commissioner Steele asked how close this property was to the Reuter-Hess Reservoir. Ms. Drybread clarified that they were relatively close but not adjacent to the actual reservoir. Due to the topography, one would likely not be able to build a custom home on this land with views of the reservoir.

Commissioner Steele asked if there had been communication with the land owner. Ms. Drybread stated that the Freshfields property was a holding of Coventry Development Corporation, the manager of RidgeGate. Ms. First added that Coventry had no immediate plans for this property. She reiterated that the best way to preserve the view shed and buffer between Lone Tree and Castle Pines was for the tract to be annexed, zoned, and regulated by the City of Lone Tree. There was no guarantee that by depicting this tract as being within the City of Lone Tree Planning and Urban Growth Area that the property owner could not apply for subdivision or development through Douglas County. However, she stated that Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) were sometimes signed between jurisdictions to preclude this.

Ms. Drybread further explained that there was a narrow strip of land separating the Freshfields holding from RidgeGate that was owned by Xcel Energy.

Commissioner Dodgen asked if this was a precursor to future annexation. Ms. Drybread stated that it was.

Commissioner Dodgen further inquired about whether anything else was in the process of being annexed. He expressed concern over the potential future burdens of annexations on Lone Tree as the City does not levy a property tax. He asked if the Castle Rock mall was playing into this. Ms. First elucidated that any annexation would have to go through a rigorous fiscal analysis. She stated that the City's Economic Development Director was aware of the proposed mall, and that these issues were examined when annexation was considered. She clarified that anytime a property is annexed, it is also zoned, and this is where the Planning Commission's review comes into play. Ms. First stated that the Southridge Preserve Planned Development was a similar situation. By annexing that residential property, the City was able to prevent ridgeline development and preserve views of the bluffs.

There was additional discussion about the benefits of annexing property along the city's Planning and Urban Growth Area.

Commissioner Steele asked if there were ridgelines that definitely needed to be preserved. Ms. Drybread stated that that was what we were trying to do, especially from I-25.

Chair Sippel mentioned that commissioners could likely see a visual perspective of this Freshfields property (located to the south of the current Lone Tree Planning and Urban Growth Area boundary) from the Glendale Farm Open Space Park trail overlook. The Glendale Farm Open Space Park is immediately east of the Glendale Farm Dog park (off the frontage road south of Schweiger Ranch). The overlook is on the north trail spur. She suggested that visiting the Glendale Farm trail might help commissioners see the natural features of this area.

Chair Sippel also suggested that a tour or a site visit of the high points in Lone Tree might be helpful for commissioners once the snow melts (and the ground is dry). Chair Sippel would like another tour of this area scheduled when the snow melted.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Sippel moved to adjourn the meeting, and Commissioner Steele seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

These minutes have been reviewed and confirmed by

Martha Sippel (name), on 3/24/2015 (date)