

HOUSING: Hearing was continued to Wednesday, June 29

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it was re-zoned residential multi-family.

In 2005, Hayden Homes received approval of their master plan for 408 residential units on 43.46 gross acres to be built in seven phases. The original master plan included multiple apartment buildings, but Hayden chose to put all single-family homes and some townhomes in those first three phases.

The 2005 Master Plan came in under the old density requirement of a minimum of nine units per acre. The three completed phases average 4.4 units per acre. Hayden's original intent was to build enough density on the other 18-plus acres to bring the overall average to nine units per acre for the entire development.

When the time came to build the apartments and townhomes, Hayden said they couldn't do it on that land and that they aren't apartment builders. The land has been for sale for several years, with no takers.

Hayden is now offering to build apartments, townhomes, and single-family homes on the property, provided the request for separating the two parcels is granted.

The Community Planning Department (CDD) has been struggling with which development code should be used if the property stays under the 2005 Master Plan — the one in force when the plan was approved in 2005 or the one currently in place. Which processes and standards should be applied? Which public works standards should be used?

Allowing Hayden to modify their 2005 Master Plan by withdrawing the 18-plus acres and then submitting a new master plan for that property, and developing it under all the current codes, seems on the surface like a simple solution.

However, that would be granting a special exemption for completed phases one, two, and four, with a density of only 4.4 units per acre, which doesn't meet the current density standard of at least seven units per acre. It does meet all other standards.

During the hearing, the concern was voiced that if the Planning Commission approves the modification request, there is no guarantee that Hayden will build apartments and affordable housing. Could that be a condition of approval? The City attorney stated that any conditions need to be tied to a reason the proposal before the Planning Commission could be denied.

Hayden Homes had four representatives at the hearing. Attorney Tia Lewis stated up front that Hayden admits their original plans for the 18 acres was a bad design.

“The old plans are not supportable from either a density or compatibility standpoint.”
— Tia Lewis

“The old plans are not supportable from either a density or compatibility standpoint,” Lewis said.

Now they say they want to find a project that works for the community. Hayden's new plan, which was on display last Thursday evening, meets

all the current codes and provides 15 percent open space with amenities like a three-quarter-acre park with picnic areas and a sport court.

The plan calls for four three-story apartment buildings with 10-12 units each, accounting for 30 percent of the housing. The plan also includes 18 attached townhomes for 10 percent and 70 single-family homes for 60 percent of the housing units. The total housing units at completion would be 128-136 with a density per acre of 7.4-7.8, which meets City requirements. The 2005 Master Plan would result in 297 total units on the 18 acres.

“We believe this is a great plan and blends in with what's already out there,” said Hayden engineer April Pust.

Citizens testified both for and against the modification, which would separate the two parcels. One of the major concerns for residents of the area is the increased traffic volume that would attend development of the land. Others urged the Planning Commission to hold Hayden Homes to their original agreement.

The density issue is of particular concern to the neighbors in the first three completed phases.

A number of citizens spoke to the lack of affordable housing and apartments in Sisters. They believe that if Hayden is allowed to build fewer apartments and townhomes than included in the 2005 Master Plan, and more single-family homes that will sell for \$275,000-\$365,000, that the affordable housing issue will not be sufficiently impacted. They argued for increased density with more apartments and townhomes.

“I'm concerned with single-family housing being

built in areas zoned for multi-family housing,” said Cort Horner.

When the word compromise surfaced during the discussion, the rest of the evening became a numbers game with all kinds of different possibilities tossed around.

Commissioner Jeff Seymour said he would like to see Hayden Homes develop the 18 acres in some way.

“We need to have compromise. I would like to hold their (Hayden's) feet to the fire to get what the city needs, but give them a way to do it,” said Seymour.

He proposed 100 apartments; 50 designated as “affordable” and 50 market rate, with 50 built in the first phase. He upped the townhomes to 30 and kept the single-family homes at 70.

At one point in the hearing a motion was made to approve the requested modification to remove the 18.37 acres from the 2005 Master Plan (the only actual request before the Planning Commission). But tagged onto the motion was the draft condition that Hayden would have to develop the 18 acres with enough density to put the entire 43 acres at a density of seven units per acre. That would mean 195 new units total.

The Planning Commission passed the motion by a 4-2 vote and the public hearing was closed, only to be reopened almost immediately due to confusion on the part of multiple parties as to what had just been approved.

The hearing closed and opened several more times during which Hayden offered a number of possible compromises and the Commission rescinded the approved motion. As the density issue

took precedence, figures of 7, 6.5, and 6.75 units per acre were batted back and forth and negotiations seemed to stall.

City Manager Rick Allen reminded the Planning Commission that a situation like this always requires give-and-take. He pointed out that the standards in the 2005 Master Plan go back to 1979 and 1999. He said that a new master plan would involve 2016 public works standards, which would solve a lot of problems for the Community Development Department.

Allen suggested that giving a little would “cure a lot of problems and make the entire situation more palatable.” He was accused of arguing for the applicant by Sharlene Weed, Habitat for Humanity executive director.

Hayden Homes closed by reminding the Planning Commission that Hayden wants to provide a project that will benefit the city and meet a need that isn't being met now.

When asked to comment on Thursday evening's hearing, Allen said, “The Planning Commission is working hard to work with the developers to find that middle ground that will allow the project to move forward while at the same time assure that apartments and townhouses are built to help with our current rental-housing shortage. It is my belief the two sides can find a solution. They are not too far apart.”

Community Development Director Patrick Davenport told *The Nugget*, “The City is desperate for this project to get underway. Hayden had been ready to file a new master plan the next day had their modification request been approved.”

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