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The most extensive of the projects under consideration was presented as Resolution PC 20 07 PUD 01 – Preliminary Planned Unit Development (PUD) and Resolution PC 20 08 SUB 01 – Tentative Subdivision (SUB) Plat.

The applications were submitted to the commission by Mercedes Serra from 3J Consulting, on behalf of APIC Florence Holdings, LLC. Serra attended the meeting and was responsive to the concerns raised by local residents. She also addressed some of the points raised in staff reports.

The resolution states the applicant plans on building 31 detached single-family residences, 49 single-family attached residences and 46 multi-family units at the northeast intersection of Rhododendron Drive and 35th Street. Amenities will include a pavilion, picnic areas, seating, a children's play area, walking trails, dog park, pocket gardens, private internal drive and alleyways.

The location is zoned Mobile/Manufactured Home Residential District (RMH) and is regulated by Florence City Code Title 10, Chapter 10.

There were a number of issues highlighted in both public testimony provided to commissioners and staff reports. Among those that trouble local residents are increased traffic, stormwater runoff and overall quality of life issues associated with the expected increase in residents and traffic.

One of the studies conducted was a traffic impact analysis done by Kittelson and Associates, a transportation consulting firm based in Portland.

The study was conducted in December 2019 and counts were taken during morning and evening drive times and stated the following:

“A trip distribution pattern was developed for the proposed development based on existing traffic patterns and the location of major trip origins and destinations in the Florence area.”

“The proposed develop-

ment is estimated to generate approximately 1,077 net new weekday daily trips, with 75 net new trips (18 in, 57 out) occurring during the weekday AM peak hour and 93 net new trips (59 in, 34 out) occurring during the weekday PM peak hour.”

This evaluation was central to the later decision by commissioners to delay any decision on the approval of the application until the commission's Sept. 8 meeting.

The sentiments expressed in the following letters opposing the project are examples of the concerns of some local residents. There were more comments submitted that were opposed to the project, in its current form, than were in support.

“Currently, the wait to turn left onto Rhododendron Drive from Westbound 35th St. is taking longer and longer,” wrote Alan Matisoff. “The addition of the new proposed dense community will make that wait even longer and ... very unsafe for cars, bicycles and pedestrians. I would hope that the City of Florence has already had Traffic Engineers look closely at this plan and make some recommendations. I do not think this new community plan can be granted approval until all these issues have been resolved.”

Tom and Karen Wilson's comments said, “Traffic on Rhododendron is already bad and 35th Street is the only access to Highway 101 for several miles in either direction. This requires everyone living north or south of 35th Street to pass by this area to get to Highway 101. Keeping in mind that Fairway Estates will be adding 80 new homes and now 136 homes from this new project. Traffic would

increase considerably on Rhododendron and 35th Street. This area is currently plagued by traffic accidents, due mainly to the amount of traffic, speed and the lack of a turning lane onto Coast Guard Road. ...”

The Wilsons also commented on water drainage and requested an environmental impact study be conducted, along with another traffic impact analysis.

The next letter brought up the possible problems with a forced evacuation in the future.

Richard and Elenor Sullivan talked about the monthly earthquake/tsunami warning siren and its importance to safety.

“However, our safety is thrown out of the window with the development of the planned construction of 126 homes at Rhododendron and 35th Street. ... When the siren goes off FOR REAL due to a natural disaster, the impact of evacuation onto Rhododendron in only a quarter of a mile north of 35th Street is going to be phenomenal,” the couple wrote.

The issue of stormwater discussed at length by Florence Public Works Director Mike Miller, who re-informed the commissioners and the public that there was no city capacity for additional stormwater drainage.

This is an issue which the applicant was aware of, but Miller added an update.

“As the comments started coming in and the concerns, especially from Seawatch Estates, I elected to have GSI Water Solutions do another review of the stormwater management system, just to address some of the issues that were raised,” Miller said “There are a number of factors, not just groundwater, that may be effected. ... There are other factors going on too.”

The commission then requested that the applicant review the submitted proposal and update the commission on the reworked plan requested by staff.

Among the many details that remain to be clarified before approval can be granted to move forward on the development were comments from of Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue Fire Marshal Tony Miller.

“During the discussion process, SVFR requested two additional hydrants (not notated on the plans presented at the time),”

Miller said. “It appears the hydrant located on the west side of Rhododendron Drive was counted as one of the additional hydrants required for fire suppression or not added to the plans presented. The hydrant on the west side cannot be utilized in the count for this project.”

This was added to the changes requested by city staff that will have to be addressed by the applicant.

On the plus side, there were also a number of high-profile endorsements for the 35th Street PUD. This included strong support from Mike Harklerode, president of the Florence Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors.

“Due to the high ‘livability’ of our community, Florence has a robust market for homes at the upper end of the affordability scale. We also benefit from multiple subsidized housing developments. What is missing is an opportunity for those entering the middle class to gain a foothold on the American dream by securing a home in which to live while pursuing greater fortunes,” Harklerode wrote. “This development has the full support of our board of directors and we encourage City of Florence leadership to pursue this venture with vigor and expedience. If Habitat can be of any support, please let us know. We are eager to support projects and policies that increase the availability of affordable housing in our community.”

Siuslaw School District Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak stated the following in his letter of support: “In my position with the Siuslaw School District, I regularly see the impact of insufficient workforce and affordable housing in the local area. Each year students and their families struggle finding available housing. This stress creates an uneven playing field for students. Without adequate housing, these students struggle to have a regular place outside of school to continue their learning at home. There is a direct relationship to academic success and a stable home environment. Each year the school district loses students as working families move to other areas with more housing options.”

Ultimately it was decided that the amount of information presented, and the detail contained in that information, required more time for commis-

sioners to read and consider before a vote could be taken. The commission decided to move the date for further consideration of the application.

“I would like Mercedes to get all of her recommendations and changes for approval to staff and then staff can answer those and make recommendations for our Sept. 8 meeting,” Murphey said. “I would like the applicant to update the stormwater runoff management plan, so it is acceptable to the City of Florence.”

The chairman then made a motion to move final consideration of the application to Sept. 8, which was seconded and approved unanimously.

The second resolution considered was an extension request filed by Architect Daniel Klute on behalf of Charles McCade, MD, of the Cannery Station Development for two applications currently pending.

The project's proposed transitional cottages are located in the southeastern quadrant of Lot 2 of the Cannery Station Development located south of Munsel Lake Road., north of the Baptist Church, east of Fred Meyer and Highway 101 and west of Florentine Estates, in the North Commercial District regulated by Florence City Code Title 10, Chapter 30.

Huber-Heidorn recapped the development timeline for the Cannery Station project. After a brief discussion, a request for an extension was approved by the commission.

The last item discussed and decided was an application for a conditional use permit.

The application was filed by Rosa Cazares and the property, located at 470 Highway 101, is owned by Aaron Mitchell.

City Planner Hailey Sheldon presented the staff report on the proposal and the commissioners had few questions for the applicant or staff. The application was approved with conditions which were agreed upon, with only Commissioner Brian Jagoe dissenting.

During the meeting, the Planning Commission also recognized the retirement of Planning Department employee Veve McPherson and introduced Aleia Bailey as an interim member of the department.

For more information, and to review the meeting's packets and agenda, visit ci.florence.or.us.



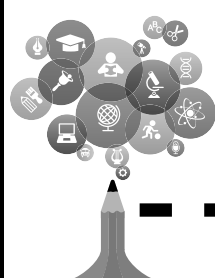
The Siuslaw News is looking at ways to help support the kids in the Siuslaw & Mapleton school districts as they enter the new school year.

Newspapers in Education is a program we have done for the last several years that allows teachers to request copies of the Siuslaw News to use in the classroom and this year we would like to extend the offer of a subscription directly to the students.

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