

NORTH EAST PLANNING COMMISSION

Virtual Meeting conducted via ZOOM
106 South Main Street, North East, Maryland 21901
Tuesday, November 10, 2020
(Rescheduled from November 3, 2020)
6:00 P.M.

Chairman Mark Dobbins called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m., via a virtual meeting with ZOOM due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Present included Commissioner Raymond Mitchell and members Michael Nair and Judy Duffy. Also present were Chris Mink, Town Engineer, CNA, Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning and Zoning and Lisa Rhoades, Planning and Zoning Assistant. Melissa Cook-Mackenzie was absent from the meeting.

-MINUTES-

October 6, 2020

Commission Mitchell made a motion to approve the October 6, 2020 Planning Commission minutes as presented. Ms. Duffy seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-OLD BUSINESS-

None.

-NEW BUSINESS-

Ridgely Forest Development. Owner and Developer: WORF, LLC, 2301 Rutledge Road, Fallston, Maryland 21047 Tax Map 31; Parcel 1355. Zoning District R-4 with Master Planned Community Overlay District.

- a. Ridgely Forest Final Subdivision Plat for Section 3B, Phase 1 and 1A 38 Attached Duplex Homes
- b. Ridgely Forest Landscape Plan for Section 3B
- c. Ridgely Forest Section 3B Open Space, Public Street lighting, signage and traffic plan

Mr. Jim Wolf and Mr. Tom O’Laughlin, WORF LLC, 2301 Rutledge Road, Fallston, Maryland, and their Engineer, Mr. Jeff Mathai, P.E., Morris and Ritchie Associates, 3445A Box Hill Corporate Center Drive, Abington, Maryland, were present via the virtual Zoom.

Ridgely Forest Final Subdivision Plat for Section 3B, Phase 1 and 1A: 38 Attached Duplex Homes

Mr. Mathai reported that the Planning Commission had previously granted Preliminary Subdivision Plat approval for Section 3B, 78 Duplex lots, at the May 4, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting. However, the engineering for the Final Plat has now been divided into three phases: Phase 1, Phase 1A and Phase 2.

APPROVED

February 4, 2021

Section 3B Phase 1 includes 34 Duplex lots. Mr. Matthai reported that the Phase 1 Sewer, Water, Road and Stormdrain plans have already received approval.

Section 3B Phase 1A includes the parking area for the Clubhouse and Pool along with four building lots. Mr. Matthai reported that the Phase 1A Sewer, Water, Road and Stormdrain plans have already received approval.

Section 3B Phase 2 shall include 40 lots, the Final Subdivision Plat for Phase 2 shall be submitted to the Planning Commission at a later date.

Mr. Mathai reported that he had received a comment letters from Mr. Mink dated October 19, 2020 and had addressed all of the comments in letters dated October 29, 2020 and November 4, 2020 and also resubmitted the plats. Mr. Mathai reported that a Subdivision Agreement dated September 14, 2020 is currently in place for Section 3B. In addition approvals have been granted for Water and Sewer allocations, Sediment and Erosion Control and Forest Conservation. Mr. Mink confirmed that MRA's response letter had addressed all of the comments in his letter dated November 6, 2020 and in addition MRA has supplied approvals from all of the County agencies.

Ms. Duffy made a motion to approve the Final Subdivision Plat for Section 3B, Phase1 and Phase 1A. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Ridgely Forest Section 3B, Phases 1, 1A and 2 - Landscape Plan:

Mr. Mathai reported that he had received a comment letter from Mr. Mink, dated October 19, 2020 and addressed all of the comments, as noted in a letters to Mr. Mink dated October 29, 2020 and November 4, 2020. Mr. Mink confirmed in his letter dated November 6, 2020 that all of the comments had been addressed.

Street Tree amendments:

Mr. Mathai reported that due to the layout of the duplexes and the required utilities located at the front of the lots, water, sewer, electric, and cable, the required street trees were unable to be planted on the lots due to the interference with the utilities. In lieu of the street tree placement on the lots, Mr. Mathai proposed additional trees located in the open space areas within Section 3B, including a tree buffer between the dog park, and residential lots which abut the dog park.

Mrs. Vennell reported that several months ago, she attended a meeting with Mr. Wolf and Mr. O'Laughlin (the developers) and Mr. Mathai and Mr. Mink to discuss the street trees to discuss whether it would be acceptable that the required street trees be installed in other locations within Section 3B, as it would be difficult to install trees with all the utility lines in the front yard. Mr. Wolf stated that Ryan Homes has agreed to provide a nice shrub package for the front of the duplexes so there will be landscape in the front of the home. Mr. Nair stated that it is understandable for this section to not install the street trees in front of the homes as in other sections due to the lack of usable front yard space, however, this requirement was known prior to

designing this section. Mr. Wolf stated that the Master Planned Community requires the developers to install a variety of home types. Chairman Dobbins wanted the record to state that it is acknowledged that the lots have been permitted at various sizes to accommodate the variety of homes since the development was designed as Master Planned Community. Chairman Dobbins stated that moving forward, the Planning Commission would prefer not to see the street trees removed from any the lots in the remaining Sections of Ridgely Forest.

Commissioner Mitchell made a motion to approve the Ridgely Forest Section 3B Landscape Plan. Ms. Duffy seconded the motion and Chairman Dobbins also approved. Mr. Nair abstained from the vote. The motion to approve the Section 3B Landscape Plan passed.

Ridgely Forest Section 3B Open Space, Public Street Lighting, Signage and Traffic Plan

Mr. Mathai reported that he received Mr. Mink's comment letter dated October 19, 2020 and reported all of Mr. Mink's comments have been addressed, as noted in comment letters dated to Mr. Mink dated October 29, 2020 and November 4, 2020. Mr. Mathai reported that the dog park was relocated from Juniper Circle to behind the duplex homes on Magnolia Drive. The dog park will be accessed by a walking path on either side of the block. There will be dog waste receptacles in various locations. Ms. Duffy inquired what is proposed for the open space area on Juniper Circle since the dog park has been relocated. Mr. Mathai stated that a gazebo with a picnic table is being proposed within the Juniper Circle open space area. Mr. Mathai reported that there will be cluster mailboxes, a pergola and benches along Magnolia Drive. Additional open space amenities in Section 3B include the clubhouse, pool, multi-purpose field and playground. Mr. Nair inquired about the double gate entering the dog park. Mr. Wolf replied that this is standard in dog parks for safety reasons. Mr. Nair inquired if there is a plan in place for maintenance of the dog waste receptacles. Mr. Wolf replied yes and reported that there is already a company maintaining the dog waste receptacles throughout the community by the name of "Duty Calls". Mr. Mink reported that Mr. Mathai has addressed the comments as stated in his letter dated November 6, 2020, however, stated that it is up to the Planning Commission to determine if the amenities in Section 3B are adequate.

Commission Mitchell made a motion to approve the Ridgely Forest Section 3B Open Space, Public Street Lighting, Signage and Traffic Plan. Ms. Duffy seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Ridgely Forest Master Open Space Plan

Mrs. Vennell reported that during the Master Planned community (MPC) amendment meetings in fall 2019, the Planning Commission had requested an entire community open space plan. Mr. Mathai presented the plan which he prepared. Mrs. Vennell reported that there are two open space areas remaining in Ridgely Forest: A tot lot is proposed for one area and the open space amenities have not yet been determined for the other area. The Planning Commission is requested to take a look at what types of open space are located within Ridgely Forest in order to determine if they believe another Tot Lot is acceptable or whether they would like to see a different type of open space amenity, such as basketball hoops, larger child playground area, etc.

APPROVED

February 4, 2021

Chairman Dobbins stated it seems to make sense to keep the older children areas by the clubhouse. Mr. Nair added that it could cause problems for home owners if they are not advised of the type of open space amenities prior to the sale of the home. Mr. Wolf reported that as each Section is approved by the Planning Commission, a plat is given to Ryan Homes to use for marketing and reference. Mr. Wolf reported that the playground and other amenities are constructed after the homes in each section are constructed, for safety reasons. Ms. Duffy reported that she liked the idea of the proposed tot lot, stating that having tot lots throughout the development promotes a community environment. For the other open space area shown on the plan, the developer can proceed with a pocket park with benches and landscape.

Construction Status in Ridgely Forest:

Mr. Wolf gave a brief update on construction status in Ridgely Forest

Section 2: There are two remaining lots to be constructed with a single family home.

Section 3A: There is one remaining lot to be constructed with a single family home.

Section 4: Three of the 31 lots have been sold.

Mr. Mathai reported the progress regarding Section 5A.

Section 5A: The clearing has begun in Section 5A, which borders the Courts of Mallory. There is an approved Sediment Control plan, an approved Stormwater Management plan and an approved Forest Conservation plan in place for this Section. Cecil County has issued a Grading permit for Section 5A.

Chairman Dobbins inquired when the developers expect to be completely built out. Mr. Wolf reported they are projecting 2-3 years until buildout.

Ms. Duffy inquired about the demographics of who is buying properties within Ridgely Forest. Mr. Wolf replied that it is primarily first time home buyers with children. About 70% of Ridgely Forest buyers have relocated from Delaware.

Chairman Dobbins noted that there were no members from the public who attended this evening's zoom meeting.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

Commissioner Mitchell inquired about the clearing of the woods located at the corner of Mauldin Avenue and Irishtown Road. Ms. Vennell reported that Cecil County had inspected the clearing, and has issued violations for the illegal clearing of this property.

-REPORTS-

Bridge Over Amtrak

Mrs. Vennell reported that both traffic lanes on the North East Bridge over the Amtrak tracks are now open.

APPROVED

February 4, 2021

-COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC-

None.

-NEXT MEETING-

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for December 1, 2020 at 6:00 P.M., however, no applications for this meeting have been received at this time. Chairman Dobbins stated that if no applications were received, the meeting would be cancelled.

-ADJOURNMENT-

With no further business, Mr. Nair made a motion to adjourn at 6:55 P.M. Ms. Duffy seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Respectfully submitted:

Lisa Rhoades
Planning and Zoning Assistant

Attest:

Mark Dobbins
Chairman