

June 25, 2019

To: Scott Tempel, Northfield City Planner

Dear Scott,

We are requesting a three-year extension of the preliminary plat on our Bluff View development project that was approved on August 21, 2018.

During the past 10 months, we have been in conversation with City staff and others to move forward with this project, and we are finding that the process is taking longer than we had expected.

At the City Council meeting where our preliminary plat was approved, one of the Councilpersons brought up the question of putting in Ford Street in one phase rather than in two phases, citing concern about access of emergency vehicles into the new development. This person also brought up that in the past, the City had taken responsibility for putting in connector streets through the 429 process, and strongly suggested that we explore that possibility with City staff.

Since that date, we have engaged in seven meetings with City staff, including two meetings where Nick Anhut, a municipal advisor with Ehlers, was involved in the discussion. At the first meeting with him on December 4, he requested we provide a more complete accounting of the costs involved in constructing Ford Street in one phase. We then employed our engineer in determining these costs, and met with staff and Mr. Anhut again on March 28, 2019 to review these figures. Through this process, it became increasingly clear to us that we cannot take on the cost/risk of putting in Ford Street at the outset of the development project. It also has become clearer to staff that Ford Street is essential and will have to be built at some point.

At our most recent meeting with City staff on June 20, which included Mitzi Baker, David Bennett, Scott Tempel, and Nate Carlson, there was agreement among all present that we should proceed in hopes of making this a 2020 project.

It is our hope that we will be able to accomplish this goal, but depending on what the City is able to do with cost amelioration and the 429 process, we may find that our best option is to sell our land to a professional developer/builder rather than continue to try to develop it ourselves. In that case, we will definitely need the preliminary plat to be extended for the three-year limit, as we anticipate that this would not be worked out quickly.

Thank you for your help in this matter, and in getting us scheduled for another Council meeting to extend our plat before it expires in August.

Vern and Joan Koester  
2351 Division St. S., Northfield