

City Council Meeting Date: October 19, 2021

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator Ben Martig

From: Mikayla Schmidt, City Planner

..Title

Consideration of the Preliminary Plat Resolution for Kraewood Addition.

..Body

Action Requested:

The City Council is requested to review and approve the preliminary plat resolution for Kraewood Addition with the conditions proposed by staff.

Summary Report:

Rebound Real Estate has applied for a preliminary plat to create Kraewood Addition on property known as the Paulson Christmas Tree Farm. Rebound Real Estate has been before the Planning Commission for voluntary review of this subdivision and has met with the surrounding neighborhood. The site has historically been operated as a Christmas tree farm by the Paulson family.

The parcel is approximately 12.5 acres and proposes to create 31 lots and is zoned N2-B: Neighborhood General 2. The proposed site layout consists of 22 single-family homes, 2 twin homes, 1 four-plex/row house and an apartment building. The main homestead site (600 Greenvale Ave.) and Parcel ID – 2236125002 are under consideration for rezoning at this time from N1-B: Neighborhood General 1 to N2-B: Neighborhood General 2.

Note: Staff has attached an ex-parte communication memo from the city attorney. The city attorney will be at the meeting for questions.

The Planning Commission (PC) held a public hearing and made several motions of additional recommendations on the preliminary plat to City Council on July 15, 2021. The PC did not make a final motion of recommendation on the preliminary plat as they wanted to form a subcommittee to create a memo to Council. The subcommittee consisted of Commissioner Buckheit, Commissioner Kuhlmann and Commissioner Schroer. The PC members, voted to separate the memo from the preliminary plat item. The PC made a motion to approve the memo as drafted by the subcommittee and send to Council (at their Aug. meeting). That memo is a separate staff report in this agenda packet.

The PC motions of recommendation from the July 15, 2021 meeting are included as an attachment to this staff report for reference. At the PC meeting on August 19, 2021, the commissioners reviewed the preliminary plat again and amended some of their original motions of recommendation to City Council. The following recommended conditions came from the PC at their August meeting and are either carried over from the July PC meeting or are new from the August PC meeting. Staff makes note of the origin of each condition listed below.

The PC made a motion to recommend approval of the Kraewood Addition preliminary plat to City Council with the following conditions:

1. **All streets within the plat be no wider than 28 feet and in compliance with the street table.**

Staff Response:

- Staff agrees with this recommendation as it provides for greater lot depth to potentially preserve more trees, it narrows the street to slow traffic, and provides more room for sidewalks.
- This condition was carried over from the July 15, 2021 PC meeting.

2. **The right-of-way be no wider than 52 feet.**

Staff Response:

- Staff agrees with this recommendation as it provides for greater lot depth to potentially preserve more trees, it narrows the street to slow traffic, and provides room for sidewalks.
- This condition was carried over from the July 15, 2021 PC meeting.

3. **Sidewalks be no less than 6 feet throughout the development.**

Staff Response:

- Staff agrees with this recommendation, as it will provide more space for pedestrians to move through the proposed preliminary plat.
- This condition was carried over from the July 15, 2021 PC meeting.

4. **The Highland Ave. stub street to the east of Kraewood Dr. will encompass all public utilities and be graded to city specifications, but not include pavement and curb.**

Staff Response:

- Staff disagrees with this recommended condition. Staff recommends the Highland Ave. stub street to the east of Kraewood Dr. be built out completely with all public utilities, grading to city specifications, and include pavement and curb.
- The Land Development Code states:
 - (11) **Dead-End Streets, Stub Streets, and Cul-de-Sac Streets (Permanent and Temporary).**
 - (a) Dead-end streets shall be prohibited, except as stub streets.
 - (b) Stub streets shall be installed to permit future street extensions into adjoining tracts, where appropriate. Barricades shall be installed at the end of stub streets and signage may be provided indicating a future street connection. Stub streets shall not exceed 150 feet in length. Where required by the city engineer a temporary connection to another street, or a temporary turnaround, shall be provided by the subdivider.

- Staff acknowledges the positive effects of less impervious surface and more green space. However, it is appropriate to have the stub street be completely installed in this case. This stub street will serve as a future extension to connect Highland Ave. to the neighborhood to the east and complete the road from Lincoln St. N. to Spring St. N.
- In addition, it is impractical to have the applicant come back and complete the street when a development to the east comes to fruition. Typically, when developments come forward, that developer would not be expected to complete a street connection onto an adjacent development. Alternatively, it was not added now the City would be responsible for the connecting street cost when, or if, the street is connected through in the future.
- It is standard practice to complete stub streets and it is part of many city's ordinance requirements. Other communities go a step further and require utilities be stubbed in and across to adjacent property. This allows for the next development to access the utilities without removing the street.
- This is a recommended condition from the July 15 PC meeting, which was clarified at the August PC meeting to include that the stub street will encompass all public utilities and be graded to City specifications, but not include pavement and curb.

5. Sidewalk shall be installed on the south side of Lincoln Parkway from Green Meadow Court to Linden Street North by the applicant.

Staff Response:

- Staff agrees with this recommendation, as it will provide more space for pedestrians to move through the proposed preliminary plat.
- This motion is carried over from the July 15, 2021 PC meeting.

6. A motion was made to remove the recommendation to align Kraewood Drive to the middle of the proposed plat along Greenvale Ave.

Staff Response:

- Staff's original recommendation and the PC's was meant to mitigate headlights into the front of the homes on the south side of Greenvale Ave (from the July 15 PC meeting).
- Aligning Kraewood Dr. further to the east allows for, as the PC noted, better access to sewer and water, slows traffic by creating a curve in Kraewood Dr., and headlight glare could be mitigated in other ways.
- Staff is supportive of the removal of the original recommendation made by the PC at their July meeting.

7. Create a non-motorized multi-modal connection from Kraewood Dr. to Ivanhoe Ave.

Staff Response:

- Staff recommends making a connection from Kraewood Dr. to Ivanhoe Ave.

- There is an existing easement on the west end of Ivanhoe Ave. specifically for emergency access of vehicles for fire, police, etc. The applicant is willing to add this connection to extend to the emergency access easement from Ivanhoe Ave. to Kraewood Dr.
- The Fire Chief was consulted on this connection and recommends completing the easement to Kraewood Dr. Staff will work with the applicant and adjacent properties to configure a connection from Ivanhoe Ave. to Kraewood Dr.
- A pedestrian and emergency access easement may require dedication on the Kraewood Addition.
- This is a new condition from the August 19, 2021 PC meeting.

Analysis:

Sanitary Sewer and Water:

All necessary utilities are available adjacent to the site from multiple locations and will be extended into the public streets.

Stormwater:

Staff will be working with the applicant to ensure final stormwater detention requirements are being met and reflected in final engineering and construction documents. Preliminary review suggests the stormwater detention/infiltration basins proposed for the project should be adequate to meet the infiltration volume, rate and flow control required under the City of Northfield Code. The filtration basins are located throughout the proposed plat in Outlot A, Outlot D and on Lot 1 Block 5 (the location of the proposed apartment building).

Streets, sidewalks and trails:

This project includes public street, utility and sidewalk connections that will connect to existing streets, and in one case allow for a future extension.

- Kraewood Drive will run through the parcel (North/South) connecting with Lincoln Parkway and Greenvale Avenue.
- Juniper Avenue, on the northeast corner of the site, will be extended west to connect to Kraewood Drive.
- Highland Avenue, on the southwest corner of the site, will extend east to connect to and past Kraewood Drive, to the easterly property line aligning with Highland Avenue for a possible future connection.

Sidewalks will be provided along both sides of all streets in the plat. A sidewalk will also be included along the south side of Lincoln Parkway from Green Meadow Court to Linden Street North. A recommended condition of this plat, which the applicant is supportive of, is to incorporate a connection from Ivanhoe Ave. to Kraewood Dr. Shifting, reconfiguring or eliminating parcels may occur to accommodate the connection.

Park Dedication:

As part of the City's Land Development Code (Chapter 34 Article 5.2.6), when there is new development, there is a requirement of Parks, trail and open space land dedication or Cash-in-lieu dedication. An excerpt from City Code is below:

The city council finds that there is a rational nexus between the demands created by the subdivision and related development of land and the need for parks, trails, open space areas, public art, and facilities.

The dedication of park land or cash in-lieu occurs as a condition prior to the approval of the final plat, this usually occurs within the development agreement for the project.

Time of Performance - Land Dedication or Cash Payment In Lieu Of. *The dedication of land or the payment of cash in lieu of land dedication by the applicant shall occur as a condition prior the city council approval of the final plat.*

The Park & Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) reviewed the proposed preliminary plat on August 19, 2021, after the application had been submitted, and PRAB made a motion to not accept cash-in-lieu for park dedication (~\$12,230), but instead land dedication. Land dedication would be roughly 6% of the net land (~11 AC) so roughly a park dedication of 0.66 acres. The applicant is willing to dedicate Outlot C on the preliminary plat to meet the park dedication per code. City Code indicates Preliminary Plats should be reviewed by the PRAB before application submittal.

In staff's review of the City's code and guiding documents, park dedication of 0.66 acres doesn't follow the objectives in City code or guiding documents for the following reasons:

1. There are five neighborhood parks within ½ mile walking distance. These parks include Cherry Park, Way Park, John North, Dresden Hills Park, Lashbrook Park.
2. Purpose of land dedication *“The policy of the city is to acquire and manage larger parcels of park and open space land resources; therefore, as a result of this policy, it is likely that a cash payment in lieu of land dedication will be the method by which this requirement will be accomplished in most instances, although not to the complete exclusion of a land dedication requirement.”*. A dedication of only 0.66 acres doesn't meet the goal of getting larger more usable track of land for the public.
3. The Northfield Parks, Open Space, and trail system plan shows a new neighborhood park north of Viking Terrace (Neighborhood Park No.6). See attached map.
4. The 0.66 Acres doesn't enhance the quality of life within the city by providing adequate parkland and natural areas to fulfill the present and future need of residents.
5. To use the parks, natural areas, and interconnecting trail corridors as a major factor in shaping development. The 0.66 acres doesn't accomplish this.
6. To maintain and enhance the natural character and aesthetic qualities of the community by providing parks and natural areas. The 0.66 acres doesn't accomplish this.
7. To encourage sequential growth within the city in harmony with the natural environment. The 0.66 acres doesn't accomplish this.

As for Council action related to approval of the preliminary plat, the applicant has indicated Outlot C for Park Land Dedication, which would satisfy City Code requirements. The City Council has the final decision on the preliminary plat and whether to accept land dedication or

cash-in-lieu for park dedication. Staff's recommendation is to accept cash-in-lieu to satisfy park dedication.

Adjacent Property:

The property to the south, east and west consists mainly of single-family residential development with a church approximately one block east of the site. Greenvale Park Elementary and the Northfield School District Office & Area Learning Center are located to the north.

Conformance with Comprehensive Plan:

The proposed subdivision has been reviewed for conformance with the Comprehensive Plan and is found to be in alignment with Comprehensive Plan objectives. The large parcel, that is the majority of the site, is zoned N2-B: Neighborhood General 2. There is an existing homestead on the property. The homestead site and a narrow parcel on the northern edge of the site (adjacent to Lincoln Parkway) are zoned N1-B: Neighborhood General 1. The Conservation and Development map in the Comprehensive Plan denotes these parcels as "Infill Sites" and "Developable Land." The Comprehensive Plan states this about "Infill Sites":

Infill sites are frequently the "next to develop" and typically already have access to infrastructure. Even though these sites are undeveloped, the fact that they are already zoned gives those specific entitlements or the right to develop certain land uses at certain densities. Redevelopment and intensification sites present the biggest challenge to develop as they have existing structures, and the community has an expectation or desire for a similar use that currently exists.

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In considering the public's vision for future growth a series of land use maps were created. The land use maps reflect the community's desire to return to a more traditional development pattern that is connected, and promotes inward rather than outward growth. The land use maps are intended to act as a framework for future development. These maps should be considered when evaluating future development, and generally illustrate the preferred development pattern.

This parcel was a tree farm, but has not actively operated as an agricultural business for many years. "Infill Sites" identify these areas as best suited for redevelopment and land intensification along the corridor with a mix of uses, with increased intensity at major nodes, or intersections, and with a redesign of existing roadways to calm traffic flow, which this project will achieve. "Neighborhood General 1" in the Framework Map of the Comprehensive Plan states:

The Neighborhood General 1 zones are found outside the historic plat of Northfield and are typified by single family homes with lots that are generally larger than those found in Neighborhood Central. There is a Land Use 11/17/08 Comprehensive Plan for Northfield 4.17 significant change in the street framework within this district, moving from a linear grid to curvilinear. The change in framework reduces the connectivity and accessibility of the road network. The diminishing quality of connectivity and accessibility due to block length and a single use zoning pattern creates an area that is less walkable than the Neighborhood Central zone.

Future Character: While considering the adjacent pattern typified of this zone, future development in the Neighborhood General 1 zone should be more pedestrian friendly and reflect traditional neighborhood qualities, such as a gridlike street pattern, the built form's relationship to the street, and street connectivity. These qualities are further explained in the Land Use Principles found earlier in this chapter.

Zoning: With the exception of the existing homestead site and a narrow parcel along the south side of Lincoln Parkway, the property is zoned N-2B. Development of the property is subject to the land uses, site design standards and regulations of the Northfield Land Development Code and N-2B Zoning District. This zoning district allows for a mix of different styles and densities of residential uses. Section 2.3.6 of the Land Development Code includes the following language and identifies its relationship to the Comprehensive Plan:

The Neighborhood General 2 (N2) district is applied to residential neighborhoods of the city that may include larger vacant areas within the current city limits and areas that will be within city limits through future annexations. The N2 district will create a pedestrian-friendly environment, such as found in the R1 district, with strong neighborhood qualities, such as a grid-like street pattern, consistent block size, compact development, a range of housing types and architectural styles, street connectivity, sidewalks, and homes located in close relationship to the street. In addition, the N2 district will include greenways and natural areas, and options for neighborhood-serving commercial. This development pattern is the preferred future pattern for the city, as expressed in the comprehensive plan.

Approval Criteria & Findings:

The Planning Commission and City Council shall consider the following criteria in the review of a preliminary plat. Criteria (a) and (g) must be met and (b) through (f) shall be considered:

- (a) The proposed subdivision must be in full compliance with the provisions of this LDC;**

Staff Response: The preliminary plat will require a few modifications, which are identified in the recommended conditions. Staff will be working with the applicant on final engineering and design details prior to the Final Plat.

- (b) The proposed subdivision must be in accordance with the general objectives, or with any specific objective, of the city's comprehensive plan, capital improvements program, or other city policy or regulation;**

Staff Response: This subdivision is in compliance with the Northfield Comprehensive Plan and the intent of the project reflects the spirit and values of many of the 12 land use principles including:

- **Encourage a compact development pattern, and support infill, redevelopment and land intensification.** – Development of the Paulson property will infill a site surrounded by existing residential homes, a church and school. The density proposed supports compact development, infill, redevelopment and land intensification.

- **Facilitate the creation of residential areas with strong neighborhood qualities.** – The infill of this neighborhood will complete street connections and have sidewalks on both sides of all streets supporting the neighborhood and surrounding neighborhoods.
 - **New and redeveloped residential communities will have strong neighborhood qualities** - The development of this parcel will create a neighborhood with mixed housing types that are drawn to the street with sidewalks and complete previously dead-end streets.
 - **A wider range of housing choices will be encourage** – This development will provide 4 different housing types, including single family homes, twin homes, a four-plex and an apartment building.
 - **Streets will create an attractive public realm and be exceptional places for people** – All of the streets proposed will have sidewalks on both sides of the street, street trees, and follow a grid-like pattern to the maximum extent possible.
 - **Places will be better connected, opportunities will be created to walk and bike** - The development will incorporate walking and biking opportunities on the street and sidewalk connections in the subdivision and adjacent to the parcel.
- (c) **The physical characteristics of the site, including but not limited to topography, vegetation, susceptibility to erosion and sedimentation, susceptibility to flooding, water storage, and retention, must be such that the site is suitable for the type of development or use contemplated;**

Staff Response: The site has rolling terrain and will be designed to accommodate new public infrastructure and residential development. Stormwater management will be incorporated into the project. The site is suitable for residential development.

- (d) **The site must be physically suitable for the intensity or type of development or use contemplated;**

Staff Response: This development infills a large tract of land (approx. 12.5 acres) which was previously a tree farm. The site has rolling terrain and will be designed to accommodate new public infrastructure and residential development. Stormwater management will be incorporated into the project. The site is suitable for residential development.

- (e) **The design of the subdivision or the proposed improvements must not be likely to cause substantial and irreversible environmental damage;**

Staff Response: Development of the site will include grading, new public infrastructure and residential development and will convert the land from a former tree farm to a residential neighborhood. The City of Northfield Natural Resources Inventory identifies the perimeter of the tree farm as Woodlands and Forest in the Semi-Natural and Planted Communities. The trees on the perimeter of the site are planned to be maintained and preserved as part of the preliminary plat submittal documents. Much of Outlots A, B and C will maintain significant tree preservation. The rears of the single family homes will do the same. In addition, the developer

proposes to provide native and pollinator friendly planting throughout the plat. The plat is not expected to result in substantial or irreversible environmental damage.

- (f) The design of the subdivision or the type of improvements must not be detrimental to the health, safety, or general welfare of the public; and**

Staff Response: The design and development of the subdivision is not expected to be detrimental to the health, safety, or general welfare of the public. Creation of the neighborhood with mixed housing types that are drawn to the street, with sidewalks is expected to result in improved connectivity and walking routes within the neighborhood and to Greenvale Park School.

- (g) The design of the subdivision or the type of improvement must not conflict with easements on record, unless those easements are vacated, or with easements established by judgment of a court.**

Staff Response: There may be an existing driveway access easement for the property owners at 600 Greenvale Ave. Staff will review the potential easement with the city attorney and the applicant. No other easements are known at this time. If there is an easement, it will follow the vacation process through the City Council.

Recommendation: Staff recommends approval, subject to the following conditions, in order to ensure compliance with the Land Development Code and applicable policies:

1. A 6-foot sidewalk shall be constructed on the south side of Lincoln Parkway from Green Meadow Court to Linden Street North by the Applicant and shown in the Final Plat.
2. Highland Avenue shall be fully constructed (i.e. utilities, grading, pavement and curb installed) to the east of Kraewood Dr. to within 20 feet of the east property line as determined by the City Engineer and shown in the Final Plat.
3. Streets throughout the plat shall be constructed no more than 28 feet wide and shown in the Final Plat.
4. Right-of-way throughout the plat shall be no wider than 52 feet wide and shown in the Final Plat.
5. Sidewalks throughout the plat shall be no less than 6 feet wide and shown in the Final Plat.
6. A 20-foot access for ingress/egress for emergency vehicles shall be shown on the final plat and the same shall be created and installed by the Applicant that connects Ivanhoe Drive to Kraewood Drive.
7. The Applicant shall meet the park dedication requirements in City Code, Chapter 34, Section 5.2.6 in the form of cash-in-lieu for parks and open space acquisition and development.

Staff has prepared two resolutions, one with park dedication in the form of cash-in-lieu and the other in the form of land dedication. Both resolutions have the condition to extend Highland Ave. past Kraewood Dr. to the east be built out completely. If the Council wishes to change this condition, they will have to amend one of the resolutions.

Financial Impacts:

NA

Alternatives:

The City Council can approve the preliminary plat with the conditions identified by staff and/or the Planning Commission, adopt alternate findings or conditions, or recommend denial if alternate findings warrant. The City Council has final decision authority, subject to applicable policies.

Tentative Timelines:

Future timeline would include (tentative – subject to change):

- Preliminary Plat:
 - The Planning Commission considered the application on July 15, 2021 and tabled the item until their August 19, 2021 meeting.
 - City Council review on October 19, 2021.
- Rezoning:
 - The rezoning includes the main homestead and the sliver parcel on the north end of the plat from N1 to N2.
 - Public hearing and recommendation to Council by the PC occurring on August 19, 2021.
 - City Council holds first reading on September 21, 2021.
 - City Council has second reading on October 19, 2021.
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Application:
 - A TIF application was received and may be considered by Council at their November 2, 2021 meeting.
- Site Plan Review:
 - No application received at this time. Application is anticipated to require staff review only.
- Final Plat:
 - No application received yet, requires Council action only.