

MEMORANDUM

TO: Northfield Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals Members

CC: Mikayla Schmidt – City Planner and Mitzi Baker – Community Development Director

FROM: Brett Reese, Steven Schmidt, and Nathan Stencil (Rebound Schmidt Stencil Development)

DATE: August 5, 2021

RE: Follow up and Comments to the July 15th Planning Commission Meeting

Thank you for the opportunity to present our Paulson Project / Kraewood Development Preliminary Plat for your review and vote. We appreciate your willingness and patience to hear the many ideas and opinions that were presented at the recent public hearing for the proposed redevelopment. The purpose of this memo is to both present our comments on several issues that came up during the session which we were not able to respond to that evening, as well as reinforcing reasons for your support and passage of this needed housing project in Northfield. We believe that in presenting you with some background information that we used to create our final design it will help you with your process and decisions as you are working toward providing the City Council with recommendations for the development.

A few overarching, framing comments before getting into the specifics. The idea and impetus for the proposed development supports and is based upon both the *existing market conditions and those forecasted* for Northfield. There is a strong need for single family homes as well as a scarcity of lots available in town, and none for sale west of Highway 3. Existing homes are sold after very little time on the market.

As to apartment living, data and research from a 3rd party housing study shares that the vacancy rate for apartments still at an unhealthy low rate of 0.4%. Thus, more apartments are needed, and particularly affordable rentals. The Kraewood development is based on Northfield market need. Further, as proposed the development complies with the land codes, supports the comprehensive plan and now the new strategic plan recently outlined by the City and the City Council. Infill, density, affordability and connectivity.

The Paulson family has owned this piece of land since 1938 and at that time all the surrounding land was undeveloped. However, since that time all of the land around it has been developed. Rieber and family now want to sell this private land and see it developed, to complete an infill neighborhood and satisfy the current housing needs of Northfield. The Paulson's have waited for the development of their land for many years, and now wish to sell to support them in their retirement.

Now on to specific items we want to address from the July 15th Planning Commission meeting.

Item 1

We request that the location of the intersection of Kraewood onto Greenvale remain as proposed and that Kraewood remain curved as proposed. This item is very important to the redevelopment

- 1) What is currently existing and how can this be utilized most effectively?

- a. When Greenvale Avenue was rebuilt 10 + years ago, sewer and water utilities were stubbed into four lots that front along Greenvale. As per our plat, the location of the intersection allows the use of these stub ins. If the intersection is moved to the middle of the block these stubs will need to be relocated which will mean excavating Greenvale to make the proper connections. Such work will be done at a considerable cost and could create future problems with the street.
- 2) The curve in Kraewood Drive is more appealing and slows traffic as opposed to a straight street.
 - a. With the curve in Kraewood, versus a straight road in the middle of the block, we will be creating a natural slowing of the traffic and a much more appealing view as you look north down the street. Curves have a softer look and feel, and are much more appealing in these types of neighborhoods.
- 3) With the existing plan, there would be no need to phase the project over time.
 - a. Per the purchase agreement, the Paulson's have the right to live in their current home for 2 years. If a road change is required, we could not fully connect Highland to Greenvale, as the Paulson property / home sits in the path. Thus, phasing of the project would be required.
 - b. If the road intersection is located as per plan, all utilities, streets and storm ponding will be installed in one phase. This makes for a more seamless installation, less disruption for the neighborhood and eliminates potential future problems with digging up utilities and adding onto them. If we can't have the current road configuration.
- 4) The location of the intersection, as per plan, does not create a traffic safety problem.
 - a. We are aware of similar intersections currently in the city. One is Winona St. onto Woodley. That intersection was not changed when Woodley was recently rebuilt. Steve grew up in that neighborhood and currently drives Woodley multiple times a day and has never seen an accident at that intersection.
- 5) Comment on possible headlight disruption shining into the home on Plum and Greenvale.
 - a. This type of situation occurs at many intersections across Northfield, and it does not create a problem. Steve personally lived in a home at the intersection of Lia Dr and Sumac Lane, which he later sold to Brett, where this scenario was very similar. Neither recall a time when headlights disrupted them and their family.

The development team would like to urge the commission to remove the condition to relocate the intersection to the middle of the block based on potential future utility problems, inability to reuse the existing utility stubs, and phasing which would increase costs. We request that the intersection of Kraewood and Greenvale be allowed to be built as shown on the plan. Again, an important element of the development.

Item 2

Comment on the Extension of Highland, off Kraewood, to the east property boundary. We request that the installation of additional curbing and asphalt on this ROW not be a condition for the plat. The team is willing to install the required utilities and road base to the eastern property boundary. We would purpose installing grass or similar natural plantings which will reduce runoff from a hard surface, create more green space, will not require plowing and will not become an unsightly location for neighbors to

park trailers and vehicles. We appreciate the Planning Commission members discussion and vote to remove the requirement of completing Highland Avenue to the east.

Item 3

We request that the tree inventory, submitted as part of the plat, be allowed to be modified to not include trees that are not permitted to be planted in the city. Such a Chinse Elm, Cottonwood, Green Ash and Boxelder. These trees currently located on the property are not desired and thus would appreciate these not be included.

Item 4

The development team continues to stand behind the 3rd party results of the traffic report memo and update by consultant Swing Traffic Solutions that Vernon Swing provided advance of the July 15th meeting. For your review, referral and consideration, a supplemental document that provides all the collected data is attached. This shows that the existing road structure can support the addition of the proposed development.

If the special Planning Commission sub-group has any questions, comments and/or needs further clarification on any items, please don't hesitate to contact us.

In closing, we again wish to stress the following points as you consider the approval of the Preliminary Plat:

1. The Paulson's want to sell their land. They are in their 80's and seek funds for further retirement needs. All of the land around them has been developed and now it is their turn. They are fully supportive of this project which they have been working on with the developers for nearly 2 years. If people had other ideas for the property, they had the opportunity to purchase it.
2. The proposed future use of the land per the Preliminary Plat meets and supports the City Land Code, City Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan in many ways- infill, density, affordability, connectivity, and increased property tax revenue to support City services.
3. City Staff has performed their analysis and due diligence, and from their work supports the project with their recommendation for approval to the Planning Commission.
4. There is a strong market demand and need for housing - both multi-family and single family. Developers don't determine what to do with land, the market does. No lots for sale west of highway 3 and per a recent 3rd party study - a multi-family vacancy of 0.4% in Northfield.

We thank you for your review and consideration of this residential development project, that meets and supports City requirements and is needed based upon apartment and housing market demand. We seek and ask for your approval of the project to move forward.