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DATE: May 22, 2018

TO: Members of the Housing & Redevelopment Authority

FROM: Janine Atchison, Housing Coordinator

Southbridge Area Update - Community Meeting

ACTION REQUESTED:

City Staff and Three Rivers Community Action Agency (TRCA) staff will present updates regarding Southbridge Area Community Meeting.

SUMMARY REPORT:

The Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and TRCA sponsored a Southbridge area community meeting on April 26, 2018. The meeting was held in the cafeteria of the Northfield Middle School from 5:30 - 7:00 PM.

Approximately 190 invitations to the meeting were sent to all residences South of Jefferson Parkway, between Division St (Hwy 246) and Maple St S, an enlarged target area surrounding the proposed project. An additional 60 invitations were sent via e-mail to other interested parties.

There were 55 total attendees at the meeting. Of the total, 28 of the attendees were neighbors from the targeted area.

The meeting began with

- Northfield Mayor Pownell welcoming guests and speaking briefly about the City’s strategic plan.
- Northfield HRA Board Chair Dayna Norvold gave a brief explanation of the HRA Board and its purpose.
- Northfield Housing Coordinator Janine Atchison spoke about why affordable housing is important to our community and gave a brief overview of the plans for the HRA owned land.

- Community Development Director Leah Hall explained the plans for Spring Creek II
- Vern Koester, land owner/developer explained his plans for development of the Koester Bluff View Addition.
- Real Estate Broker Pete Mergens provided information about a proposed 10 Unit townhome development.

Attendees were asked to sign in and were given post-it notes for their comments. After the presentation the presenters fielded several questions before inviting all attendees to come forward to have a closer look at neighborhood plans and architectural renderings.

Participants were encouraged to ask questions and give opinions regarding architectural styles for Spring Creek II, as well as to write comments on post-it notes to be attached on the large presentation & map boards.

FEEDBACK FROM ATTENDEES

Feedback from attendees from the neighborhood

- It is important to make sure local contractors are included
- Traffic concerns during construction; be sure children are safe (x 4)
- Make sure property management cleans up wrappers left near the pond by children
- The party that plows the streets for Spring Creek I leaves tracks in the neighbors yards with the machine s/he uses
- “When will the next informational meeting be held?” Request for better maps.
- Concerned about constructing trucks coming down Southbridge Drive. Concerned about sidewalks for kids. Suggestion to install speed bumps on Southbridge Drive.
- “I watch the kids get off the bus and walk in the road in order to get home in the winter. No sidewalk on the side the bus drops them off!” Also concerned about the construction trucks driving down Southbridge.
- More visitor parking spots are needed (Spring Creek I) (X2)
- A temporary road to accommodate construction equipment other than Southbridge is needed; Too dangerous with children and narrow streets
- Interested in a single level townhome. The 2018 Northfield property taxes are high. Question if this project will help retired households.
- There is a need for more one level units for an aging population
- “Is there a sewer and water plan? MNDOT plans?”
- Concerns: Access to HWY 246, why are certain areas in NFLD exempt from low income housing?, This is a flood plain, NFLD contractors are not eligible to bid because of HRA rules - totally sucks.
- You must connect 296 to Ford before I would support any of the projects
- Management office on-site is a must, lighting needed. Traffic - need to open up streets

- Safety plan for students walking to school
- Kids crossing highway to middle school-SAFETY
- Keep city park behind Arbor St undeveloped

Feedback from attendees from outside of the neighborhood

- Need to build storage for bicycles and lawn furniture
- Connectivity between developments is important for traffic and people flow
- How can we help first time homebuyers with limited incomes get enough financing to afford a house?
- Be intentional about the traffic entering 246 (middle school traffic)

ANALYSIS:

The Community meeting was well attended. Attendees shared many insights and concerns with TRCA, HRA, Koester and Mergens. Most people were concerned about the safety. The safety concerns ranged from traffic onto Hwy 246, safety for pedestrians and children's safety. Safety for children walking to school and crossing Hwy 246 was also mentioned several times.

TRCA and HRA will consider these comments and concerns as they move forward with development.