



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Consider Resolution for Spring Creek Townhomes 2nd Addition Preliminary Plat.

Sponsors:

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Attachments: 1. 1 - Resolution - without PC Recommendation, 2. 2 - Resolution - with PC Recommendation, 3. 3 - Exhibit B - Spring Creek Townhomes 2nd Addition Prelim. Plat, 4. 4 - Spring Creek Townhome II Location Map, 5. 5 - Combined Map of Spring Creek Townhomes 2nd Add., Bluff View Prelim. Plat and Surrounding Area, 6. 6 - Bluff View Vision Map w. Road Connections, 7. 8 - Bluff View letter 729 pdf, 8. 7 - Northfield Planned Walking & Bicycling Network Map, 9. 9- Resolution 2019-070 Extending Prelim Plat Approv

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
8/4/2020	1	City Council	approve	Pass

City Council Meeting Date: August 4, 2020

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: Mikayla Schmidt, City Planner

Consider Resolution for Spring Creek Townhomes 2nd Addition Preliminary Plat.

Action Requested:

The Northfield City Council considers approval of the attached Resolution approving the Preliminary Plat of Spring Creek Townhomes 2nd Addition.

Summary Report:

Spring Creek Townhomes 2nd Addition is located on land currently owned by the Northfield HRA and is being developed by Three Rivers Community Action. In 2019, the project was approved for tax credits from the State legislature to develop a 32-unit income qualified townhome project. The project includes multiple non-profit partners, several funding sources available to affordable housing and a TIF request. The property will be transferred to Three Rivers after all approvals and financing are in place.

At this time, the property is proposed to be subdivided into a Common Interest Communities (CIC) plat. The preliminary plat consists of 11.19 acres - zoned N2-B: Neighborhood General 2, with the site arranged to provide four 6-plex and two 7-plex townhome complexes. The subdivision layout is generally consistent with previous concepts based on the ARCON development.

This area, also known as Southbridge Subdivision, was originally proposed by the ARCON Corporation to develop 52 single-family residential lots, 140 row-style townhomes and 124 back-to-back townhome units. Only Phase 1 of the project was constructed before the economic crash of 2007-2008, which forced ARCON to abandon the project. Since then, some portions have been developed by other land developers with a large area remaining undeveloped. The undeveloped portion is currently being contemplated for additional phased platting and development. The adjacent area, owned by the Koester family, has an approved preliminary plat on record (Bluff View), which was approved in 2018 and then extended for three years in 2019. The area immediately adjacent to the south of Spring Creek Townhomes 2nd Addition is the location of the first phase of Bluff View, which is currently being contemplated for development beginning in Spring 2021.

Background

Spring Creek Townhomes 2nd Addition is located off Southbridge Dr. (northeast of the project site) and will create a new street, Millstream Lane (north/south portion of the street) which will wrap around the majority of the housing project becoming Brookside Drive (east/west). A private access drive will serve a majority of the units, like the Maple Brook townhomes project, though it will function more like a traditional alley.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing and reviewed the preliminary plat on June 24, 2020. The public notice sent to the newspaper and the public notice mailed to properties within 350 ft. was sent with an error in the description of the plat location. The notice described the location of the project with cardinal directions, which were incorrect, they should have been opposite of what was published. The error was brought forward to Administration and the city attorney for review, and a final determination was made by the City Administrator to proceed with the public hearing. Notices to individual properties did include a map with the location of the property, and staff did not receive any inquiries regarding the location or description. The error was explained to the applicant and the Planning Commission. Staff received one public comment in support of the project, via email, which staff shared during the public hearing.

The Planning Commission discussion was primarily focused on the street and trail connections. The commissioners made a motion to approve the preliminary plat and to ensure connectivity to Ford Street be completed. The Commissioner's discussion included an intent to connect Millstream Lane to the south, through the Bluff View preliminary plat, to Ford Street. This condition is in conflict with the approved preliminary plat for Bluff View and residential units planned for that location. To attempt to resolve the conflict, staff brought the item back to the Planning Commission July 16, 2020 requesting reconsideration of their motion, and recommended the roadway alignments and connections shown on the Spring Creek Townhomes 2nd Addition plat be accepted as presented without the addition of another connection to Ford Street. The Commissioner's chose to not reconsider the item, and made no comment or motion on the item. The same evening the Planning Commission was asked to reconsider their motion, it was brought forward to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) for comment. The Board members asked questions on what traffic counts were expected and to reiterate/clarify the location of the trail. The Chair summarized the PRAB was in consensus and supportive of the preliminary plat.

Grid pattern streets are valued as a planning best practice where practicable, and the Land Development Code and Comprehensive plan instills that value. In this instance, the roadway pattern proposed by the applicant for Spring Creek Townhomes 2nd Addition incorporates a grid pattern to the extent practicable. The additional connection proposed by the Planning Commission conflicts with an already approved preliminary plat for Bluff View. Bluff View's preliminary plat was approved with a trail that could connect to the Spring Creek development, and while this does not include a connection for vehicles, it does create a connection for pedestrians and non-motorized travel.

It is staff's recommendation to approve the preliminary plat with the roadway alignments as presented with a

condition to include a pedestrian connection from the corner of Millstream Ln./Brookside Dr. to the trail along Spring Creek as presented in the preliminary plat.

Considerations to accept the roadway alignments and connections on Spring Creek Townhomes 2nd Addition preliminary plat as presented by the applicant include:

- Bluff View's preliminary plat was recommend for approval, by the Planning Commission to City Council, on April 19, 2018, which did not include a road connection to meet up with a future development at the location the Commission recommends be accommodated on Spring Creek Townhomes 2nd, but did include a trail that could connect.
- The preliminary plat for Bluff View was presented to Council on August 21, 2018. Council approved the preliminary plat, which included a trail between two planned 4-plexes. In the Council staff report, it noted the Planning Commission made recommendations to the applicant. The applicant included all of the recommended changes in their preliminary plat to Council. The incorporated Planning Commission recommendations included:
 - Connectivity from Ford Street leading north, so children will have adequate walking access to the elementary and middle schools
 - Connect Southbridge Drive east/west to their development
 - Continuation of Aspen Street to the south
 - Neighborhood commercial corner lots entering the development on Ford Street from Hwy 246 were encouraged.
- Bluff View preliminary plat has an approved trail route, which aligns with the trail connection for Spring Creek Townhomes 2nd Addition. The proposed trails for both preliminary plats follow the route identified in the City of Northfield Pedestrian, Bike and Trail System Plan by Toole Design. The Northfield Planned Walking and Bicycle Network Map shows the route. By adding the condition of a sidewalk or trail connecting from Millstream Ln./Brookside Dr. to the Spring Creek trail, it will provide a more completed grid network for those who walk or roll.
- Continuing Millstream Lane through the Bluff View Addition would result in the loss of one 4-plex unit. The 4-plex units proposed by the developer for Bluff View are designed to be zero-entry homes for seniors and will be market rate pricing. Both of which support the goals of the Strategic Plan.
- The approval of the Bluff View Addition preliminary plat should result in predictability for the developer and approval to proceed to a Final Plat with the roadway alignments and connections approved on the Preliminary Plat.
- Additionally, the additional connection recommended by the Planning Commission would result in the loss of residential units, would create a lower return/revenue from development, and have higher infrastructure cost to build the road connection.

Analysis

Sanitary Sewer and Water:

All necessary utilities are available adjacent to the site.

Stormwater:

The Engineering Division is working with the applicant on stormwater and had some initial, but minor comments on their preliminary review. The stormwater detention/infiltration basins proposed for the project are adequate to gain the required infiltration volume and the rate and flow control required under the City of Northfield Code.

Streets, sidewalks and trails:

This project provides proper street, sidewalk and trail connections. The street layout follows historic layouts for the proposed development by ARCON and will properly connect to future development. Sidewalks connect to each unit and adjacent streets. The trail along Spring Creek is shown on the proposed preliminary plat. Staff and the developer worked extensively to have this route be the first option. Part of the trail connection will be on land to the east and adjacent to the project site, this trail route is planned to move forward if agreements can be made with the adjacent landowners.

Street width and construction will follow Northfield street construction standards, and sidewalks will be installed on both sides of every street, except the private drive being there are sidewalk connections to the fronts of the units.

Parking requirements are all met on site.

Park dedication:

Park dedication was fulfilled through land conveyance to the City of parkland along during previous phases of the project.

Adjacent Property:

The property to the south and west is vacant land, which is part of the Bluff View preliminary plat. Farmland is also located to the south of the project outside city limits. To the north lays Spring Creek Townhomes, Spring Creek Soccer Complex and single-family homes. The east side of the development connects to the original Southbridge development of single and multi-family homes.

Conformance with Comprehensive Plan:

The project is shown as in the pipeline for residential development in the Land Use section of the Comprehensive Plan. The new streets will accommodate pedestrians and increase street connectivity.

Approval Criteria:

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;
- (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;
- (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;
- (d) The site must be physically suitable for the intensity or type of development or use contemplated;
- (e) The design of the subdivision or the proposed improvements must not be likely to cause substantial and 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
- (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.

Findings:

- (a) The proposed subdivision was found to be in compliance with the LDC through review by the City Planner and the Development Review Committee.
- (b) This subdivision is in compliance with the Northfield Comprehensive Plan.
Intent - reflecting the spirit and values of the 12 land use principles.
- *The small town character will be enhanced* - The development enhances the small town character by respecting the desired street pattern and being sensitive to pedestrian connectivity.
 - *The natural environment will be protected, enhanced and better integrated in the community* - The development respects the environmentally sensitive streams and employs up to date stormwater management techniques. New trails are to be added with the project to better connect the trail system along Spring Creek.
 - *New and redeveloped residential communities will have strong neighborhood qualities* - The development will have strong neighborhood qualities such as appropriate street size, sidewalks, trails and townhome units fitting with the existing neighborhood character.
 - *Neighborhood serving commercial will be small scale and integrated with the residential context* - NA
 - *A wider range of housing choices will be encourage* - These 32 townhomes will help fulfill a need of additional housing and add to the diversity of options in the community. The units will consist of 8 two-bedrooms, 22 three-bedrooms, and 2 four-bedrooms.
 - *Streets will create an attractive public realm and be exceptional places for people* - Millstream Lane and Brookside Drive are designed to follow the curvilinear change created by Spring Creek with sidewalks along both sides.
 - *Places will be better connected, opportunities will be created to walk and bike* - The development has a connected street network with walking and biking opportunities.
- (c) The physical characteristics of the site are conducive to development. Stormwater management practices will be up to current standards. An infiltration system will be installed to mediate runoff from the new units.
- (d) This preliminarily graded section of land from ARCONs original development plans is well suited for residential development. Three Rivers is being asked to provide soil borings of the infiltration areas to ensure proper mitigation of the stormwater runoff.
- (e) The subdivision design will not cause irreversible environmental damage. Land Development Code regulations, MPCA stormwater management and the employment of best practices will ensure this.
- (f) The design of the subdivision is in no way detrimental to the health, safety, or general welfare of the public.
- (g) There are no conflicting easements in the development.

Financial Impacts:

There could be financial impacts associated with the preliminary plat application, if the City Council pursues a roadway connection from the southeast corner of this plat, through the adjacent Bluff View property to connect to Ford Street. A development agreement will outline the developer obligations with the final plat.

Tentative Timelines:

Three Rivers is on a fast schedule to move ahead with the preliminary and final platting due to the project having multiple layers including the TIF and the land being donated by the Northfield HRA. Prior to the City's execution of a final plat, the applicant must enter into a development agreement with the City for the installation of all required improvements and financial obligations associated.

Alternative Options:

The City Council shall approve the request, approve with conditions (where allowed by law), or deny the request.

If the City Council accepts the Planning Commission recommendation to connect Millstream Lane through to Ford Street, the City would need to request the developer for consideration of this request. Additionally, the City would need to acquire the land for the road, which would likely include purchase of the land or condemnation with just compensation.

It is staff's recommendation to approve the preliminary plat as presented, without a southerly extension of Millstream Lane, and subject to a condition to include a sidewalk or trail connection from the corner of Millstream Ln./Brookside Dr. to the trail along Spring Creek, which is shown on the preliminary plat, to facilitate non-motorized connectivity in this location.