

**Cuyahoga Falls City Council  
Minutes of the Planning & Zoning Committee**

**October 15, 2018**

**Members:** Paul Colavecchio, Chair  
Mike Brillhart  
Russ Iona

Mr. Colavecchio called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. All members were present.

**Legislation Discussed:**

Temp. Ord. A-87

**Discussion:**

**Temp. Ord. A-87**

An ordinance accepting the Planning Commission approval, findings and conditions of the site plan for Redwood Living Community on Bath Road, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Fred Guerra, Planning Director, stated that this project includes 87 attached, single-family single-story apartments. The apartments are 1,200 to 1,400 square feet. They have two bedrooms, two bathrooms and each have two-car garages. The density of the entire site is 2.36 units per acre. The acreage is 36.87 acres of which 22 acres, or 59 percent, is dedicated open space, 7 acres, or 19 percent, is hard surface, that includes streets, driveway back porches, and 8 acres, or 22 percent, is categorized as other, and that includes backyards and tree lawns. The private investment is about \$16 million on this project. The stormwater management is a 100-year post-development rate to a two-year pre-development rate. This is much greater than what regulations require, but they are meeting the proposed regulations for stormwater. They will be using Summit County sewer. A proposed gravity sewer will drain to a proposed pump station in the southwest corner. There's a new cul-de-sac east of Bath Road. There will be a proposed force main to be installed on West Bath Road heading west to the intersection of West Bath Road and Keyser Parkway and tie into an existing county sanitary manhole. The development will tie into Cuyahoga Falls water lines on West Bath Road. The water and sewer surcharge will be \$476,555. Public streets will be constructed. The developer has completed a trip generation study, intersection site distance survey and a traffic impact study. The property owner is Bath Woods LLC, 737 Ridge Crest Road, Akron, Ohio 44303. The Developer is Redwood Apartment Neighborhoods, 7510 East Pleasant Valley, Independence, Ohio 44131.

At the October 2, 2018 Planning Commission meeting, the Commission members voted to recommend approval of the Major Site Plan (Section 1113.11 Major Site Plan Standards) for the Redwood Neighborhood on West Bath Road subject to the following findings and stipulations:

I. Section 1132.07 A. Planning Criteria:

- a. Attached single family apartment homes shall be allowed as an immediate transitions to adjacent single-family uses as indicated on the submitted Preliminary Plan with 91-foot

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rear building setbacks for north property line and 65-foot rear building setback for west property line.

b. A 40 foot scenic easement shall be created along the north property line (behind Units C, D, E and F). The scenic easement shall not be cleared of trees or vegetation.

c. A 10 foot strip at the rear of the Units A and B (approximately 300 feet) shall receive heavy screening intensity per Table 1145-26: Landscape Design — Screening Intensity.

2. Section 1142.02 B Multi-Family Structures- Walls/Roofs: Fifty (50) percent of the front facade shall be brick veneer, stone, or cast stone. Bricks shall be warm colors. In addition, all roofs shall be 6:12 pitch.

3. Section 1142.03 Access and Circulation: Due to site conditions, it is not feasible to construct rear lanes to access rear loaded garages or to construct side load garages, therefore a modification of this standard is appropriate (Section 1141.03). The modification shall be allowed with the addition of coach garage doors with windows.

4. Section 1124.03 Flood Plain and Stormwater: The storm water management system shall be designed to limit run-off flows of the 100-year post development rate to the 2 year pre development rate.

5. Section 1122.05 Intersection Design (ingress/egress): Appropriate intersection design shall be finalized prior to subdivision application submission. In addition, a traffic study and engineering design of the road with public input shall be completed to assure safe ingress and egress

Ms. Pat Rakoci, Redwood Apartment Neighborhoods, 7510 East Pleasant Valley, Independence, Ohio 44131, stated that they have worked with Mr. Guerra and the City to come up with something that would be beneficial not only to Redwood, but to the City of Cuyahoga Falls. There are 87 units. The setbacks are 25 feet from the property line. There is going to be a preservation easement in addition to the wetland easement that was recorded years ago when it was located in the City of Akron. Redwood builds quiet, safe neighborhoods. The majority of the residents will be seniors, in addition to professionals. The rents will be between \$1,600 to \$1,800 a month. One reason that Redwood has been so successful is not everyone wants to always own a home, but they want to feel like they have a home. What Redwood delivers are beautiful two-bedroom, two-bath homes, maintenance-free. They're very high end with granite countertops, two full bathrooms, two bedrooms and vaulted ceilings.

Mr. Colavecchio stated that there are Redwoods located in Hudson, also. He asked how long they have been located in Hudson. Ms. Rakoci stated that she believes they started that project in 2010 or 2011, and it is similar to what they will build in in Cuyahoga Falls.

Mr. Eric Smith, Prime AE Group, 540 White Pond Drive, Suite E, Akron, Ohio, 44320, presented the following study results that had been undertaken to determine how traffic generated by the new construction will impact traffic operations in the vicinity and whether any roadway improvements

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are needed to accommodate site-generated traffic. This study conforms with generally-accepted traffic engineering study criteria:

**Site Location and Study Area**

The proposed site is located on West Bath Road east of Keyser Parkway on nearly 37 acres of undeveloped land north of the roadway. Access to the property from West Bath Road is to be located near the center and on the outside of a horizontal curve in the roadway.

**Existing Roadway Function and Geometrics**

West Bath Road is a two-lane east/west major collector serving mostly local traffic in Cuyahoga Falls and Bath Township. The posted legal speed limit is 35 mph. Due to the historically rural nature of what was once Northampton Township and rolling terrain, West Bath Road's alignment is curvy and hilly in spots. The proposed site access drive is located on the outside of one of those curves. Being on the outside of the curve is advantageous as it can allow for good intersection visibility and site distance. There are in place advance curve warning signs with 25 mph advisory speed plaques and chevrons delineating the curve. In the westbound direction, there is a School Bus Stop Ahead warning sign after the curve. In the eastbound direction, there also is an advanced warning sign for a hidden drive, which is located on the inside of the curve. Intersection sight distance at the proposed site drive has been surveyed and documented and meets ODOT design criteria.

**Site Traffic Generation**

The development is anticipated to generate 42 new trips in the AM Peak and 52 new trips in the PM Peak.

**Findings**

The introduction of the Site Drive onto West Bath Road will not have a significant impact on traffic flow on West Bath Road. The projected traffic conditions do not justify installation of auxiliary turn lanes. Traffic turning left from the site drive may experience some delays in finding a gap in traffic. However, the sight distance from the site drive meets design criteria, which will allow for proper gap identification. Currently, each approach to the proposed site drive along West Bath Road is posted with a WI-3 advanced warning sign to alert motorists that there are two curves ahead.

**Recommendations**

To address the traffic impact of this development and existing roadway concerns, the following recommendations are put forth for consideration:

1. Replace the existing advanced warning signs with Wi-i0e advanced warning signs to indicate the presence of the proposed site drive and the private drive on the inside of the curve.
2. Install radar-activated Slow Down LED signs at each approach to the curve on West Bath Road.
3. Micro-grind the roadway surface in upcoming years to retain friction.

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Mr. Tony Demasi, Engineer, stated that there are plans to micro-grind that curve again in about two years. That is something that the City intends to do regardless of whether this development is built. Mr. Demasi stated that he agrees with the traffic study presented by Mr. Smith. No one is speeding excessively in that area. The crash reports show speeds of 30 to 35 at the time of the accident, which is at the speed limit, but faster than the advisory speed of 25. Any way they can advise drivers to slow down the speed going through the curve, whether it's through flashing signs, or some other means, they will certainly look through all the options.

Mr. Colavecchio stated that, during the Planning Commission meeting, residents were concerned because of the location of the entrance. While the Planning Commission approved it, there was trepidation about accidents. He stated that the measures that have been discussed are probably the best that can be done. They just have to hope everyone drives carefully. Mayor Walters stated that in the 24 years at his previous job, he made 12,480 trips right through that S-curve. The curve looks a little bit milder than it really is at a higher rate of speed. He stated that he entered the parcel to see the visibility to exit. He could see, to the west, all the way to the crest of the hill, which gave plenty of time for him to make a left turn. Looking to the east, there was almost forever visibility. The road, itself, is dangerous. That is because people are going too fast. Mr. Colavecchio stated that, with the curving roads and the hills, there is no perfect place to have an entrance and an exit, but, as long as you give proper warning, this is about as good as it is going to get. Residents who showed up at the Planning Commission stated that a lot of accidents don't get reported. People don't want to have their insurance rates go up, so they do whatever they do to get out of ditches. Mr. Demasi and Mr. Smith are addressing these concerns, but he wants to make sure that the residents out there know that they are doing everything they can to make it as safe as possible.

Mr. Iona stated that, in reference to the traffic study, there's 87 units and each one has a two-car garage. On the traffic study, the numbers for ingress and egress are 94 trips a day. That's less than 60 percent of those. Mr. Smith stated that it was 94 during the peak hour; not the day. Mr. Iona asked if there was a projection of how many total trips that's going to be outside of peak with that many units. Mr. Smith stated that he didn't do that calculation for the whole day. They focus on the peak hours, the morning and evening peak. The Institute of Transportation Engineers, which is a national traffic engineering society, has reams and reams of empirical data counting all the entrances and exits to a variety of land uses, from shopping centers to subdivisions. They take all that empirical data, and they come up with average rates, or they come with the best fit line statistical rate. It's the best thing man has available to project. It says, based on the number of units, how many trips, one trip in and on trip out, can be anticipated from this development. That is the industry standard. Industry standards are not based on how many garage spots there are. Of all the studies of this type of development, this is the best guess that mankind has to anticipate how much traffic is coming from it, and they use that manual to calculate those trips. Mr. Iona stated that Ms. Rakoci and Mr. Mann have done an excellent job of working with Ward 8 residents. The problem with all new developments is that most of them are in Ward 5 and Ward 8. He likes the project, but still has problems with traffic situations. There is a lot of traffic. There is a lot of

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wrecks that aren't reported. This is great development, but he would have to have more experts to tell him what else can be done about the traffic before he supports it.

Mr. Brillhart stated that he has had a surprising number of calls on the impact on Woodridge Schools. That's of great concern to some folks. Woodridge Schools are having some problems. They need the levy to pass. Now, they are going to add more rental property and not going to pay that much taxes. He would like to see a study on what the impact on the schools could be. Mr. Guerra stated that they are looking at an estimated \$18-million-dollar project. All the residents are either young professionals and retirees. There are no children. There is no tax abatement. It's an \$18-million project, and they're going to be paying taxes on an \$18-million project. Right now, this piece of property is vacant, so there's hardly any taxes other than just the land. There is going to be a big jump.

Mrs. Pyke asked if she could have a list of the volumes in this study, including the direction of those cars, the time of those cars and the accidents. She asked if they looked at the individual accidents. Mr. Smith stated that they had. Mrs. Pyke asked what the average age group is for those accidents. Her main concern on this project is someone who is going westbound, turning into the development, and someone coming up behind them veering left of center to go around them, and someone coming through that curve eastbound. She can't imagine putting people at risk for head-on accidents at that curve. It's not only site distance coming out of that development; it's people coming around that curves that are sitting there waiting to turn. Mr. Smith stated that he has that information and will get it to her.

Mr. Gorbach stated that Mr. Iona made the comment that there are a lot of unreported accidents there. He is not sure how they could be counted if they were not reported. With respect to what Mrs. Pyke stated, people need to obey the current traffic laws. People shouldn't pass on a curve, just like they shouldn't pass people on a hill. People need to obey the traffic laws, and they need to be cognizant of their own safety. They cannot legislate people not being good drivers and obeying every law. He appreciates that there are some concerns there, but he wants to make sure that they're not making statements as facts that they don't have any basis on.

Ms. Nichols Rhodes asked if the City was planning on installing the signs that have been recommended and would the developer or the City pay for this. Mr. Demasi stated that that depends. If the development doesn't get approved, the developer would not put money up to put the signs up. These signs are something that they have talked about with the Developer. They have talked about some cost sharing with them, including all of the high-friction treatment systems like the micro-grind. They are always looking to improve this and other curves that in the city where we have accident history. The chevrons and the micro-grinding are examples of how the City has taken steps, through the years, to bring more awareness to drivers of the upcoming conditions and to provide more traction for them. Ms. Nichols-Rhodes asked if the speed limit on that road could be changed to 25 miles an hour. Mr. Demasi stated that, according to Revised Code, because there is more than a mile between Northampton Road and State Road, it requires

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the speed limit to be 35, but they can put an advisory through the curve, which is 25, and that's what has been done.

Mr. Pallotta asked if there is any way they can make the entrance off the curve. Mr. Guerra stated that there is no other way to go to the east, because there's wetland and other properties. The site distance isn't a problem. This is the natural location for it. All the other developments that were going to go in there used that entrance. Mr. Miller asked if they have looked at possibly widening the road to put in turn lanes. Mr. Demasi stated that they have not. Between State Road and Northampton Road, there are two roads. That would not warrant any turn lanes with the low traffic during peak hours. Mr. Colavecchio stated that there are accidents happening there before there is even a development. Hopefully, with the signs and everything else, people will slow down. This may reduce accidents.

Mrs. Kathy Arthur, 2187 West Bath Road, stated that she loves the idea of the apartments. The City is trying to tell them that the sign and flashing lights will make a difference. Where she lives, they have a flashing light. It's 25 miles an hour. They had another car off the road just this last week. These signs don't work. People will go as fast as they think they're safe to go.

Tia Stathopoulos, 578 West Market Street, Akron, Ohio, 44303, spoke in favor of the Redwood Development.

Mr. Brillhart moved to bring out Temp. Ord. A-87, second by Mr. Iona. Motion passed (3-0).

The meeting adjourned at 7:36.