

Staff Report

**DEVELOPMENT OF OLD MIDDLE SCHOOL PROPERTIES**

May 6, 2014

On March 25, 2014, with the support of the developer of the proposed Breckenridge project, the City Council passed a motion to schedule a workshop to obtain "citizen and developer input on rezoning the three Breckenridge parcels..." It was hoped that from this workshop a better understanding of each party's perspective could result in a project that would be acceptable to both parties.

In order to help the parties prepare for the workshop, during the week of April 14<sup>th</sup> City staff met individually with the property owner/developer of the proposed Breckenridge project, with a group of 10 representatives of the Old Middle School/College Creek Neighborhood Association, and with Warren Madden, Senior Vice President for Business and Finance at ISU, to help clarify their respective priorities for the development of all three parcels

Discussions at these meetings focused on how the development process may unfold and what types of development is likely to occur in terms of type, location, and intensity of development as measured by bedrooms of student rental housing. Some of the developer's concepts from the neighborhood/developer outreach from the summer of 2013 were also reviewed. Ultimately, there was an emphasis on trying to learn from each party, given the current development plans and City policies, if there were certain priorities related to development that may be accommodated through a broader dialogue about all three of the Breckenridge properties, rather than on an individual site basis.

To help the City Council better understand the input you will receive at the May 6<sup>th</sup> workshop discussion, staff has attempted to highlight below what we believe are the essential issues for each of the interested parties. In addition, in order to provide some context to this information, it is important that the Council remember the following set of assumptions that will impact your ultimate zoning decision:

- Current zoning requests are for R-L (for the North and Middle parcels) and FS-RL Zoning (for the South parcel)
- Development will be consistent with Subdivision Code requirements

- Given the above, minimum development levels may result in approximately 500-700 total bedrooms across all three sites<sup>1</sup>
- Breckenridge intends to develop 100% student rental housing
- A maximum of three unrelated persons per rental unit is allowed, consistent with the definition of family and the Rental Housing Code

**BRECKENRIDGE DEVELOPERS**

The applicant believes they have a viable development within current requirements (RL for the North parcel, RL for the Middle parcel, and FS-RL for the South parcel). Their intent, and top priority, is to develop student rental housing with detached homes to the maximum extent practicable. The developer plans to start development as soon as they have approvals, which they hope to receive later this summer. However, the developer has identified the following additional priorities that they are interested in to potentially facilitate an alternative development plan of their three sites.

- They want a total development size of 1,000 bedrooms; spread across three sites
- They want more 5 bedroom dwelling houses in exchange for fewer total units (while maintaining the same bedroom totals)
- They want a clubhouse to be allowed on the Middle parcel along State Avenue
- They want to only be required to subdivide (plat) the Middle parcel
- They want the bike trail on the South parcel to be relocated on site
- They want high-density residential on the North parcel with mixed-use buildings (commercial on the first floor and apartments on the upper floors) along Lincoln Way with buffers to the neighborhood(s) to the south

**OLD MIDDLE SCHOOL/COLLEGE CREEK NEIGHBORHOOD REPRESENTATIVES**

The neighborhood association had broad representation of members from across the area. Staff's discussions were a combination of describing development requirements and processes (e.g. mandatory storm water and flood control), and what issues may not

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<sup>1</sup> Calculating minimum development levels within FS-RL and RL zoning is difficult to estimate. It is dependent upon a number of factors related to Master Plan requirements and subdivision criteria as applied to each site. The stated range is a rough estimate by staff based upon these standards and criteria along with a discussion with the applicant.

directly relate to zoning or subdivision standards. Overall, the neighborhood expressed a common concern for the use of all three sites exclusively for student rental housing, since the sites are interspersed throughout their neighborhood. Staff would characterize the neighborhood's priority interests as follows:

- They want to minimize the total number of student-oriented rental units and bedrooms, which includes the limit of 3 unrelated persons per unit, to no more than 400 bedrooms<sup>2</sup>
- They want to preserve the South parcel's natural and recreation areas with an increased conservation easement from 7 acres to 18 acres
- They want to ensure residential development is consistent with subdivision requirements so the units will be attractive for owner-occupied re-use
- They want to increase the off-street parking requirements within the development to account for the number of rented bedrooms and guests
- They want to make sure that the needed traffic improvements and traffic calming techniques are implemented at the time of development and not deferred
- They want to protect the character of the natural surroundings and ensure that safety issues are addressed in the South parcel by relocating the bike path

### **IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**

Warren Madden emphasized the following priorities for the University as they relate to the Breckenridge project:

- They want a 60-foot setback on the South parcel to provide a buffer to the University property
- They want the bike path proposed on the South parcel to be relocated away from streets and parking lots
- They want the developer to install any needed traffic improvements at the intersection of Mortensen and State or along State Street

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<sup>2</sup> The combination of the neighbors' interest in RL zoning for all three sites with a density similar to the neighborhood of 3.7 units/acre, combined with increased conservation easements, results in what the neighborhood believes would be development of approximately 400 bedrooms total for all three sites. The definition of "family" already limits single-family homes to no more than 3 unrelated persons.

- They want these parcels to be developed for single family use and, therefore, support RL
- They want the bike path in the South parcel to be lighted by the developer
- They want the developer to install a pedestrian crossing along State Street
- They want a higher density on the North parcel in return for less density on the South and Middle parcels
- They would be willing to acquire 29 acres from the South parcel from the developers for the appraised value

### **FORMAT FOR MAY 6TH WORKSHOP**

In order to ensure some structure to the workshop, the following format has been established with the participants' concurrence.

- I. Twenty minutes will be granted to the Developer to highlight their priorities for the project
- II. Twenty minutes will be granted to the Neighborhood Association Representatives to highlight their priorities for the project
- III. Ten minutes will be granted to the Developer to respond to the priorities of the Neighborhood Representatives
- IV. Ten minutes will be granted to the Neighborhood Representatives to respond the priorities of the Developer
- V. Others in the audience will have an opportunity to provide input
- VI. Time will be set aside for the City Council members to ask questions
- VII. Open discussion among all parties