



VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC.

Date: March 14, 2019
To: Village Plan Commission Members
From: Garden Homes Project Consulting Team
Re: Garden Homes Draft Redevelopment Objectives

This memo and attachments are provided in preparation for the special meeting on March 26th concerning the future redevelopment of the Garden Homes neighborhood. This memo includes a summary of the public outreach process and our recommendations for moving forward. Attached are the following:

- Draft Redevelopment Objectives (track changes has been used to show the revisions made to the draft discussed at the public meeting on February 25th)
- Materials from the first public meeting held on January 10th
- Materials from the second public meeting held on February 5th
- Materials from the third public meeting held on February 25th

Public Meetings

Three public meetings were held over the course of eight weeks. Meeting announcements were sent out via email by Village staff using the Village Newsletter mailing list. All meetings were held at the Village Hall. The attached meeting packets include the PowerPoints presented by the consultant team, the verbatim and summarized worksheet responses provided by the attendees, and the sign-in sheets.

The PowerPoint presentations for the first and third meetings included keypad polling where attendees could enter their responses to questions electronically and all participants could immediately see the results. Responses to the questions are shown in the bar graphs within the PowerPoint slides. In addition, a summary of all questions in tabular and graphic form is provided in the meeting packets following the PowerPoint presentation. Although all responses were anonymous, the first few questions for both polling events included information about where people live so we were able to differentiate results between those who live in the Garden Homes neighborhood and those who live elsewhere.

Meeting #1, January 10th

Approximately 65 individuals attended the first meeting, including 15 who live in Garden Homes. The consultant team presentation included an overview of the neighborhood history and general setting along with a summary of responses to a questionnaire mailed to all remaining owner-occupants in the neighborhood prior to the meeting. Following the keypad polling questions, small group discussions were used to identify neighborhood Assets, Issues, and Opportunities.

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Shaping places, shaping change

Responses to the keypad polling questions were fairly similar for both those who live in Garden Homes and those who live elsewhere, except for the following:

- Neighborhood residents were nearly unanimous in excluding rental housing from the residential types the Village should consider for the study area (Q9).
- On the whole, neighborhood residents were more opposed to considering mixed-use development in the study area than respondents as a whole (Q10).
- 71% of neighborhood residents chose “Preserve and protect those features that reflect the unique history of the Village” as the top Comprehensive Plan priority for the Village as a whole compared with only 45% of all attendees who chose this response (Q11).
- 53% of neighborhood residents chose “Match its historic character as much as possible” as the most important issue for new development in the study area compared with 42% of all respondents choosing “Stormwater management” as the top response.

Meeting #2, February 5th

Approximately 40 individuals attended the second meeting, with attendance likely impacted by the severe weather that evening. The consultant team PowerPoint presentation included a summary of results from the first meeting and an introduction to three alternative types of redevelopment layouts and three alternative types of residential units that might be considered for the neighborhood. These were strictly three different options offered for discussion purposes and not intended to represent the only or preferred options. Small group discussions were used to evaluate the options and to identify the advantages and disadvantages of each. Attendees were not asked to compare the options nor to select preferred options.

Meeting #3, February 25th

From the input provided at the first two meetings and our professional analysis and experience, we prepared draft Redevelopment Objectives for the neighborhood and had them posted to the Village website. The meeting announcement emailed to the entire Village about five days prior to the meeting contained a link to the Objectives so residents could review them prior to attending.

Approximately 34 individuals attended the meeting, including nine from Garden Homes. The consultant team presented a summary of results from the first two meetings and key assumptions underlying the draft Objectives. The component parts of the Objectives were then reviewed one at a time followed by keypad polling asking if the particular Objective was Too Restrictive, Too Lenient, Just Right, or if the attendees had No Opinion. Following each question, attendees had an opportunity to share why they selected their particular response and suggest revisions.

Residents of Garden Homes differed significantly in their opinions of most of the proposed Objectives from a majority of all attendees at the meeting, including:

- 39% of neighborhood residents thought the Objective to Utilize Traditional Residential Building Design was “Too Lenient” compared to 41% of all respondents who thought it was “Just Right” (Q7).
- Only 44% of neighborhood residents thought the Objective to provide Adequate Buffering was “Just Right” compared to 72% of all respondents who thought it was “Just Right” (Q8).
- 85% of neighborhood residents thought the Objective to Incorporate Common Open Space was “Just Right” compared to 79% of all respondents that thought it was “Just Right” (Q9).

- Only 43% of neighborhood residents thought the Objective to Minimize Vehicular Impacts was “Just Right” while another 43% thought it was “Too Lenient.” These compared to 67% of all respondents who thought it was “Just Right” (Q10).
- Only four Garden Homes residents answered Question 11 concerning the Objective to Seek Affordability and the responses varied between them. This compared with 67% of all respondents who thought it was “Just Right” (Q11).
- 62% of neighborhood residents felt the Village Should Consider Creating an Affordable Housing Program for Owner-occupied Units Only compared with 34% of all respondents who felt the same way (Q12).
- Overwhelmingly, both neighborhood residents and all respondents felt the Objectives for both the West and University Areas were “Too Lenient” (Q’s 13 & 14).
- 50% of Garden Homes residents indicated that nothing should be changed in the Village Comprehensive Plan compared with 32% of all respondents who felt the same way (Q16).

Recommendations

Understandably, the remaining residents of Garden Homes view potential future development of the neighborhood differently than the rest of the community. The challenge of this project all along has been to try to balance these different perspectives with the goals for the community as a whole, development economic feasibility, and market trends in the area. From the outset, and throughout the process, we were given no instructions from anyone at the Village to steer the project either toward or away from any particular outcome, and our own thinking continued to evolve as the community discussions took place and more information became available. While we did have some discussions with the primary property owner throughout the process, he also made no demands and did not share information on his plans. As result, the Redevelopment Objectives are based strictly on what we heard and our professional judgement in trying to strike a balance between the various factors.

In their current form, the Objectives are intended to be used as informal guidelines to help prepare and evaluate potential redevelopment proposals. Options for the Plan Commission to consider include:

- Leaving the Objectives as informal policies
- Including them in a Comprehensive Plan amendment
- Including them in a Zoning Code amendment

The distinction between these options is important because the more formal and regulatory the Objectives become, the more some of the terms will need to be defined and the language carefully chosen. For instance, in a regulatory setting what would terms like “may,” “should,” or “be avoided” mean and how, exactly, would they be applied? As informal policies both the Village and developer retain flexibility to interpret and apply the Objectives and to determine how best to resolve any apparent conflicts between them. While this does leave some of the specifics open-ended, we believe the breadth and depth of issues the Objectives cover provide a solid framework for guiding the developer’s project design and the Commission’s ability to evaluate it. In either case, the Commission should first decide what level of formality/regulatory authority it wants the Objectives to carry before spending significant time in reviewing and revising them.

Given that the East Area is owned by a single individual who has experience as a developer and has indicated his intent to submit a redevelopment plan in the near future, **our recommendation is to leave the Objectives as informal policies.** Our expectation is that the developer would use them in preparing his plans and would need to explain how he has attempted to address them when presenting his project to the

Plan Commission and public. Likewise, the Plan Commission would use the Objectives in evaluating the developer's proposal, suggesting potential changes, and ultimately as the basis for making a decision. Because both the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code strictly limit development in the neighborhood to single family homes, the Village has significant discretion in deciding whether to make any changes thereby placing the burden on the developer to demonstrate why such a change is necessary and how impacts on the remaining homes would be mitigated.

As noted above, a majority of attendees of the third meeting felt the Objectives for the West and University Areas were too lenient. Those who provided comments indicated that the suggested uses, densities, and intensities were too much of a departure from the homes that are there now and that a phased approach to such changes could significantly isolate and impact any residents who decided to remain. While we believe the long-term future of these Areas needs consideration, we think that the conversation may be better informed once a plan for the East Area is approved (and possibly built). Accordingly, **we recommend the Plan Commission set the Objectives for the West and University Areas aside** and first focus on those related to the East Area before determining a direction for these other Areas and reviewing their Objectives in more depth.

We look forward to the meeting on the 26th to discuss all of these issues further with you.