

ITEM NO. 1B PRELIMINARY PLAT FOR FAIRFIELD FARMS EAST ADDITION 1; SOUTH & EAST OF 25TH TERR & O'CONNELL RD (SLD)

PP-12-15-11: Consider a Preliminary Plat for Fairfield Farms East Addition 1, located south and east of 25th Terrace & O'Connell Road, including considerations of a waiver to install sidewalks on only one side of the street. Submitted by Johnson Group, LLC, for Fairfield Investors, property owner of record.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Ms. Sandra Day presented item 1B.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

Mr. Aaron Gaspers, Johnson Group, was present for questioning.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioner Belt inquired about the recent work done with complete streets and what part that played in the discussions.

Ms. Day said there was strong support for many to require sidewalks on both sides of the street. She said a lot of planning had gone into this area specifically and that it had been platted for some time but not constructed. She said there were sidewalks on both sides of the streets for the collector and arterial streets but that the interior local street piece would be applicable to the variance.

Commissioner Blaser inquired about the statement 'if there is no sidewalk and the street is of standard width then I can go the direction I want to go anyway.' He asked if that meant someone would have to cross the street.

Ms. Day said yes, to stay on the sidewalk someone would need to cross mid-block or at the intersection.

Commissioner Blaser said a lot of work was going into Complete Streets and he felt the issue would come up again. He said in this case he would not vote to approve the variance. He found it hard to believe that section of sidewalk was the expense that would break this job. He felt sidewalks should be on both sides of the street and the City Code should be followed. He expressed concern for the safety of children and the handicapped.

Commissioner Liese said it would not hurt the discussion to know what additional cost would be associated with a sidewalk.

Ms. Day said the City Engineer did a back of the envelope calculation and it was \$4,000-6,000 per lot estimate.

Mr. Gaspers said it would be an additional \$1,000 per lot.

Commissioner Blaser asked how many lots would not have a sidewalk.

Ms. Day said she did not know off the top of her head.

Mr. Gaspers said roughly there would be a sidewalk on one side of the street. He said roughly half of the lots would not have a sidewalk in the R-O-W in front of their lot.

Commissioner Hird said he agreed with Commissioner Blaser. He said having sidewalks on both sides of the street becomes more important in a residential area. He said he might vote in favor of the plat but did not agree with the variance portion of it.

Commissioner Singleton said she lives in an older neighborhood that does not have sidewalks and she does not experience any problems with that. She said her main concern was low cost housing in Lawrence and that outweighed the issue of sidewalks on the other side of the street. She said it was not enough of an issue for her not to vote for it.

Commissioner Britton asked the applicant what the cost to the homeowner would be.

Mr. Gaspers said the number \$1,000 was re-spread out over all the lots in the subdivision.

Commissioner Britton asked what the cost to the buyer would be.

Mr. Gaspers said it would be passed on to the buyer.

Mr. McCullough said there are several subdivisions platted under the old Code, such as Doo Little Farm. He said there may be more requests that have been platted under one set of Codes who come in for replatting so this would be helpful in setting precedence for the future.

Commissioner Liese said the hardest thing about serving on Planning Commission was separating fact from emotion. He didn't know the facts supported the idea that the absence of a sidewalk would result in childhood deaths. He did not think this was a child welfare issue. He said he would support the variance because affordable housing was needed and he was not convinced that the absence of sidewalks would be a real problem.

Commissioner Belt said sidewalks on the other side of the street would be twice the safety. He said it may not be worth shortcutting just to save a little bit of money because one of the roles of the Planning Commission was public safety.

Commissioner Burger said she liked having sidewalks on both sides of the street but the traffic here would not be heavy. She said although she would like to support what Complete Streets was trying to do she did not feel in this case it was appropriate.

Commissioner Britton inquired about why the Code changed in 2006.

Mr. McCullough said it was probably to get toward the Complete Streets philosophy.

Commissioner Britton asked what the total cost to consumers would be.

Mr. Gaspers said he would have to talk to his client but that it would vary.

Commissioner Britton wondered what effect it would have on the ability for a consumer to afford the house. He said he lives in a neighborhood with a sidewalk on only one side of the street and he didn't think it was that big of a deal for safety or aesthetics. He did not think it seemed like that big of a burden and he was not sure it should have an exception from the Code.

Mr. McCullough said there was currently an approved plat on the books and the applicant could implement with a sidewalk on one side of the street.

Commissioner Culver said to keep the price points where they were designed to be he did not think a variance in this situation was uncalled for. He said he would support the plat.

Commissioner Hird said he had reservations about not having sidewalks on both sides of the street but would support the plat. He said given the limited circumstances the variance was justified. He stated he was hesitant to agree to not having sidewalks on future developments.

ACTION TAKEN

Motioned by Commissioner Singleton, seconded by Commissioner Liese, to approve the following:

Variance request from Section 20-811 which requires sidewalks on both sides of the street and allow sidewalks on one side of the subdivision streets.

Preliminary Plat of the Fairfield Farms Addition No. 2 and forwarding it to the City Commission for consideration of acceptance of easements and right-of-way and subject to the following condition:

1. Provision of a revised Preliminary Plat that states: Phasing may or may not occur in the numerical order shown. Adequate facilities for public infrastructure shall be reviewed with each final plat as the area develops and may be reflected in public improvement plan recommendations.

Motion carried 6-2, with Commissioners Belt and Blaser voting in opposition. Commissioner Finkeldei was not present for the vote.