

**CITY OF REDMOND  
INNOVATIVE HOUSING REVIEW PANEL  
MEETING SUMMARY  
January 12, 2009**

**NOTE:** This summary is not a full transcription of the meeting.

**PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT:** David Scott Meade (Chair), Vibhas Chandorkar (Vice Chair), Judd Black, Mike Evans, Sue Petitpas (Alternate), Alex Vaschillo (Youth Advocate)

**STAFF PRESENT:** Sarah Stiteler, Senior Planner; Jeff Churchill, Associate Planner

The Innovative Housing Review Panel is appointed by the Mayor to evaluate proposals submitted under Redmond's Innovative Housing Program, as described in the Redmond Community Development Guide 20C.30.62.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was convened at 7:05pm by Mr. Meade. Youth advocate Panel member Alex Vaschillo was introduced. It was clarified that Mr. Vaschillo is a non-voting member, as is Ms. Petitpas in her alternate role. The purpose of the meeting was to make a decision on whether to authorize the applicant for the Rosehill Community Development proposal to proceed with a development application.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY**

The meeting summary for the December 15, 2008 meeting of the Panel was unanimously accepted.

**ROSEHILL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**Description:** 9-home residential development on 0.99 acres, arranged around a common open space and community building. Home sizes would range from about 1,638 square feet to 2,552 square feet.

**Location:** 7300 and 7306 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE

**Applicant:** Yuval Sofer, YS Development

**Project Team Present:** Sally Roth, Johnston Architects

**Staff Contacts:** Sarah Stiteler / 425-556-2469 or Jeff Churchill / 425-556-2492

**Public Comment**

Six members of the public provided oral comment regarding this proposal.

Stephanie Aleshire

Ms. Aleshire, residing on 134<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE showed a picture of a flat residential roof that had collapsed under the weight of recent snowfall. She commented that trees that the applicant has proposed to save would not survive the impact that development would cause to the root system. She commented that showing pictures of flat garage roofs was not comparable to the proposed home roofs that the applicant is proposing. She said that the applicant's drawings indicate that rooflines would overlap each other. Last, she noted that there is nothing like what the applicant proposes in the neighborhood.

Johanna Palmer

Ms. Palmer, residing at 12911 NE 128<sup>th</sup> Place, spoke on behalf of her mother, Caroline DeYoung, who owns two parcels immediately north of the proposed development site. She expressed concerns about privacy if the homes are built. She said that the wooded nature of the site would not survive property development. She was also concerned about tree health, and noted that her mother regularly removes unhealthy trees. She noted that three-story homes and underground garages don't exist in the neighborhood. With regard to stormwater, she commented that she saw vaults and rain swales on the plan; in her research, she had found that raingardens should be at least 10 feet from home foundations. In response to a question from Mr. Chandorkar, Ms. Palmer said that the underground parking garage is

a problem because of potential security and drainage issues. She added that security gates could mitigate some of her concern, while stating that she was not speaking on behalf of others in the audience.

#### Shelly Yee-Hinniger

Ms. Yee-Hinniger, residing at 7133 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE stated that the proposal is not consistent with neighborhood design standards. She related communication with Rob Jammerman of the City of Kirkland, who informed her that two similar developments in Kirkland, Danielson Grove and Kirkland Bungalows, featured detached homes but not underground garages. She had visited Issaquah Highlands and commented that it is being developed by experienced, high-end developers, and that for 3,500 residential units there is only one community center. She asked whether Rosehill Community Development really needs a community center, and whether anyone would use it if it were built.

#### Kim Yates

Ms. Yates, residing at 13301 NE 75<sup>th</sup> Street commented that her property is not a buffer and should not be considered as such. In response to an earlier question from Mr. Chandorkar, she said that underground parking garages have in some cases become transient housing, places for drug trafficking, and marked with graffiti. She also said that such garages are technically difficult to construct. She asked how trees adjacent to the garage would be affected. She commented that she was insulted by a Panel member's comment at the December 15, 2008 meeting that neighbors lacked the vision of the applicant. She commented that she had lived in a solar-powered house, and that in high school she initiated the first alternative energy curriculum and also won related grant money. She reiterated that she is not against innovation. She stated that this proposal does not help affordability, but rather only accomplishes an increase in density. She urged the Panel members to review Redmond's tree protection ordinance, and asked whether this proposal meets it. She commented that City staff overstepped their authority by redefining affordability to mean 120% of median income rather than 80% of median income.

Ms. Petitpas later responded to the comment regarding affordability, noting that the City's affordable housing regulations are triggered only in developments of ten or more units. This proposal is for nine units only.

#### Caroline DeYoung

Ms. DeYoung, residing at 7324 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE commented that her yard had been described as a buffer zone. She reiterated that it is her yard and not vacant. She noted that one or more trees located in her yard may have roots extending into the applicant's property and development could adversely impact her trees. She commented that the roofs shown by the applicant are not in her neighborhood and that the proposed development would not blend in. She commented that the proposal would add traffic to 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE, which is now an arterial. She commented that the development would add to drainage problems that already exist. She said that she already cleans storm drains during rainstorms.

#### Linda Chay

Ms. Chay, residing at 13106 NE 72<sup>nd</sup> Street, said that she agrees with Mrs. DeYoung's statement that 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE gets congested with new homes. She also commented that there are many pedestrians on 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE. She said that the parking garage could lead to an increase in crime, and that the general design of the proposed development was not the same as what is around it in the neighborhood.

### **General Panel Discussion**

Mr. Meade opened the discussion by asking Panel members to provide their general comments on the proposal. Mr. Vaschillo began by stating that he felt that the site layout, in particular the proximity of the homes to the community center, may build community among the residents, and that he felt the 4-star rating was an asset to the proposal. He said that while the proposal is innovative, it doesn't look like surrounding development.

Mr. Black stated that he had questions and concerns related to design, height and bulk, tree retention, stormwater, and addressing the street (132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE). He said that he felt the proposal met the criteria of the Innovative Housing Ordinance.

Ms. Roth, the architect, reviewed the conceptual stormwater plan with the Panel, explaining that in general, pipes would carry water from roofs and impervious areas to a vault underneath the development driveway. She stated that the trees have been evaluated by an arborist and that City staff had received a report from the arborist.

Mr. Evans stated that the underground garage would lack passive security and would be friendly to car prowlers. He said that it was a bad idea on its face, and that no one can just wish cars away. He said that with the garage, physical control of the car is lost. He suggested redesigning the project to put garages below individual homes. He said that the project needs profound change before it could be approved. He said that it was imperative that the Review Panel get this project right.

Mr. Chandorkar listed the positives and negatives he sees in the proposal. Positives included the 4-star BuiltGreen certification and the community center and/or shared open space. He noted that given the cost of building new homes and the size of this proposed development, he does not believe it is realistic to seek an affordable home at 80% of area median income. Negatives included garage security and the impact of the garage on tree roots, the introverted feel of the neighborhood, and the apparent assumption that surrounding lots will remain undeveloped.

Ms. Petitpas also listed positives and negatives she saw in the project. Positives included a strong community area and smaller homes. She concurred with Mr. Chandorkar regarding the affordable housing issue and also said that she felt the stormwater plan could be worked out. Negatives included the internal focus of the neighborhood, five-foot setbacks on the perimeter of the property, and the potential for car prowls in the underground garage. She noted that car prowls are a reality in every neighborhood, including those without underground garages.

Mr. Meade commented that the stormwater plan was fairly conceptual, but that he had no concerns with it. He noted that a lower impervious surface area would result in less stormwater discharge from the site. He said that only the garage door would be visible from the street, and asked whether that was really a design problem. He said security is a problem on all projects and indicated that there were measures that could be taken to mitigate it. Mr. Evans suggested turning the garage so that there would be more eyes on its entrance. Mr. Meade continued by saying that he had questions about how the homes will address 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE. Ms. Roth responded that homes seven and nine would have gabled roofs, and that the living areas of home 9 would be turned to 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE. She added that the common building had been reduced to one-story with a green roof.

### **Discussion of Issues on Issues Matrix**

Mr. Vaschillo stated that he supported the inclusion of an underground parking garage to reduce the visibility of vehicles. Mr. Black saw the parking garage as really about trade-offs related to site layout and commented that the proposed garage was an efficient use of space and more aesthetically pleasing than vehicles parked on the surface. Mr. Evans suggested that the parking garage entrance be taken off the street to improve security. Mr. Sofer, the applicant, stated that the team had spent much time thinking about how to handle cars on the site, especially the inherent trade-offs. Mr. Evans reiterated his concerns about the parking garage and suggested that the applicant look at relocating the garage entrance as an alternative.

Regarding stormwater, the Panel felt that it was critical that the stormwater plan be carefully reviewed by City technical staff, and that the review lead to a careful design that successfully handles stormwater from the site.

Regarding roof forms, the Panel felt that the applicant's proposal to add gabled roofs to homes seven and nine was an improvement. During the discussion, it was clarified that the roofs shown by the applicant

are in a Redmond subdivision located near the corner of Old Redmond Road and 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE in the Grass Lawn neighborhood.

Regarding trees, Panel members had no further comments beyond what had been said during the general discussion. Several Panel members urged careful treatment of the trees on site so as to preserve their health.

Panel members were satisfied that the proposal met impervious surface area requirements. On a related matter, a Panel member asked how residents would move goods and materials in and out of homes. Ms. Roth explained that the fire lane was a hard surface and that residents would have access to carts to move materials. A Panel member asked whether the paths leading to the homes would also have hard surfaces. Mr. Sofer responded that they were exploring pervious hard surfaces such as pervious pavement, so as not to increase the impervious surface area of the site.

On landscaping, the Panel asked that the applicant better screen the south and west sides of the garage. However, Panel members noted that it would be important to not block views for drivers exiting the garage, and so landscaping along 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE should not be so tall that it blocks drivers' views. Ms. Roth characterized the intent of the Panel as to create a "green wall" along the south side of the property.

Regarding the orientation of the homes, Mr. Chandorkar added that the treatment of home 9 was better than in the first proposal, particularly the window treatments. Other Panel members had already expressed their views regarding orientation of the homes.

In response to questions from the Panel, Mr. Sofer presented information about the innovative features of the homes' interiors. He highlighted the 4-star BuiltGreen certification, the potential for buyers to acquire "green" mortgages, and eight other techniques proposed for the homes' interiors. Mr. Chandorkar, who had raised the issue, said he was satisfied with the response.

The Panel had an extended discussion about perimeter setbacks for this development. Mr. Vaschillo said that he preferred 10-foot setbacks and that one way to achieve that would be to reduce the size of the homes. Mr. Black said that in the spirit of being good neighbors, he preferred 10-foot perimeter setbacks all the way around the property. He noted that 10-foot rear yard setbacks are standard in Redmond single-family neighborhoods. Mr. Evans agreed that 10-foot setbacks were necessary. Mr. Chandorkar and Ms. Petitpas commented that it might be possible to achieve increased setbacks if the community building were removed. Mr. Sofer commented that if the community building was moved and homes were brought closer to the center of the site, that homes might be aligned parallel to property lines instead of at an angle, which could be a worse outcome for neighbors. Ms. Petitpas said that she preferred 10-foot setbacks wherever possible, but that it would be acceptable to her for patios to extend into the setback. She also added that a 10-foot setback provided for a bigger backyard. Mr. Black said that limited encroachments by patios are already allowed by code. Mr. Meade said that the Innovative Housing Ordinance allows latitude for setbacks, and felt that the recommendation by staff for 10-foot setbacks on the south side and 5-foot setbacks on the north and east sides was appropriate. The compromise position of the Panel was that the applicant should maintain 10-foot setbacks as much as possible, and that there should be no setback less than five feet. For example, it could be ok for the corner of a home to encroach into the 10-foot setback area. For purposes of plan review, a Panel member suggested that buildings should have an average perimeter setback of ten feet, with no setback less than five feet.

With respect to the community building, while the Panel had discussed the potential benefits of removing it from the site plan, such as a more open feel in the center of the development and the potential to more easily move homes away from property lines, they concluded that it is up to the applicant to decide whether or not it is viable. Some Panel members also commented that the community building is a positive feature on the site plan in that it can encourage a sense of community among residents.

The Panel members also noted that they endorsed the staff recommendations related to size of homes and housing affordability.

## **Motion Regarding Rosehill Community Development**

Mr. Chandorkar moved and Mr. Black seconded a motion to authorize the Rosehill Community Development to proceed to development application with conditions. The Panel decided as follows:

- Proceed with the development as presented in the application packet presented at the December 15, 2008 Innovative Housing Review Panel meeting, as amended at the January 12, 2009 meeting, with the following conditions:
  - Develop an alternative garage entrance plan to present to the Technical Committee that shows how the garage entrance could be from the north, internal to the site, rather than the west to allow the Technical Committee to review which option is best overall, the west or north entrance;
  - Provide 10-foot average perimeter setbacks, with no perimeter setback less than five feet;
  - Reduce the size of the homes so that at least half of the homes meet Redmond's definition of "size-limited" (no larger than 1,900 square feet); and,
  - Provide at least one home affordable to a family earning no more than 120% of area median income.

The motion carried 3-1 with Mr. Evans voting no.

## **Announcements**

Mr. Churchill announced that the public would have further opportunities to remain involved as the applicant proceeds through the technical review process. A neighborhood meeting will be announced at a later date and all who have provided addresses will be invited.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40pm.

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