

REVIEW

Review of the conceptual site plan for 188 Norcross Street/Frazier Street

Courtney Lankford stated that this was an application that was made for mayor and city council for the conditional use of the property. The applicant is here to discuss it. The item is before the Commission tonight to review the site plan and determine if it is appropriate within the historic district. The comments and recommendations that the HPC makes this evening will be forwarded to the Planning Commission and mayor and city council. The neighborhood meeting will be on March 21, 2013. It will go before the Planning Commission on April 16th and will go before mayor and city council on May 13th.

Tony Landers stated that he wanted to emphasize what Courtney Lankford says. He spent some time yesterday and today thinking about this aspect of the meeting. This project is extraordinarily important and significant in Roswell. The Commission's comments are with respect to the site plan. All other issues that may be ancillary to that plan with regard to education, traffic, water, any humanitarian issues are another matter and those issues are going to be vetted he is sure with the subsequent meetings that follow this one. Landers stated that the Commission's comments are with regard to the site plan itself.

With that, Tony Landers recognized Mike Walsh.

Mike Walsh clarified that it was just the site plan, not the elevations. Tony Landers stated that he does not think that any elevations that have been provided at this point.

Courtney Lankford stated that there are the renderings in the application. The Commission can comment and give their opinion to the applicant. Those comments are mainly addressed to the applicant, not mayor and city council. Right now, the Commission is supposed to review the site plan but they can give their opinions on the renderings. Lankford stated that the applicant is present.

Pete Hendrix presented the application. He practices law at 6085 Lake Forest Drive in Sandy Springs, GA. He thinks the Commission is well familiar with the property that is the subject of the application. It is the northeast corner of Norcross and Frazier Streets commonly known as the Frazier Street Apartments. It consists as they sit today of 152 very large units. The proposal that has been requested is for a total of 320 units approximately 195 of those will be one bedroom and approximately 125 will be two bedrooms. The property also has had a request made for a concurrent variance under Section 17. 4 to allow the 20 percent reduction that the staff is capable of making to take them from 512 parking spaces to 410 parking spaces. That is obviously in furtherance of the desire in order to have the pedestrian connectivity and engagement on this particular piece of property.

Chris Cassidy, who is division president of Lennar Multi-family Investors is here with specificity to be able to walk the HPC through the proposal, the site plan and to give them a look at what the first cut is as far as elevations are concerned. The staff did provide them as they went through their preliminary meetings with them with what had been put together with the Grove community hybrid perform based ordinance. So they did have the benefit of a sense and feel at least of what work had been done as to the look and feel of what would be desired.

With that, Pete Hendrix asked Chris Cassidy to step on up.

Chris Cassidy stated that he was with Lennar Multi-family, 8865 Old Southwick Pass, John's Creek, GA. With permission he would like to step up front so that the can walk the Commission through the elevations.

Over the last several weeks after filing the application, Cassidy took the opportunity to meet with several of the stakeholders, the Downtown Development Authority and others to really solicit input with respect to the design, the overall feel of the project, what would be the elevations and/or the lay out and site plan. As Cassidy told those at that meeting it is still a work in process. They have managed to take in a lot of information that they have heard and incorporate that into the plan, which he is really going to address today.

As the Commission knows, the Frazier Street Apartments is about 10.6 acres. It is bounded by Norcross Street and Frazier Street and as Pete Hendrix stated it is roughly 16 buildings and 152 units. The construction and the design today is very suburban and so with the new form-based zoning overlay they really wanted to try and create a site plan that fits in contextually with the city and really all of the things that are taking place around the property.

Cassidy presented an elevation or an aerial of the overlay site plan with the adjacent retail and then really the proximity to Canton Street and city hall. So, it sort of shows the Commission who it layers into the overall community.

Cassidy presented a blow up of the site plan and currently as it exists in its form today it is roughly five buildings with roughly 320 lease-flats. They tried to make it very urban in nature and texture. They are all three-story buildings. They are all pushed up to the street with really the parking in the rear. The applicants tried to focus their attention really on Norcross Street as a main arterial street and then Frazier Street. As they pushed the buildings up they have created a nice urban streetscape on Frazier Street with parallel parking, street trees, sidewalks, some urban furnishings, and then they did the same as well on Norcross Street. So, as one is coming up Norcross Street or looking down Norcross Street from a massing standpoint this is a view that potentially one would see. Again, these elevations are a work in process but they sort of give the Commission the form and the massing and sort of the pedestrian scale of the buildings. They are three stories in nature. All of the units have their own private balcony space whether it be

elevated on the ground floor. And as one drives up Norcross Street or Frazier Street they have also tried to create an internal sort of main street that is T-shaped that goes through the property. So, one sort of gets a continuation of the parallel parking, the rhythm of the street trees and the sidewalks on the interior space, in the center being a small urban park with a fountain or a pass of space for their residents to congregate in addition to any others in the community that may want to enjoy this area as well.

What they have tried to do is from the main street is really give it an urban feel to meet the design and the intent of the Grove Way. They have taken all of their parking to the rear while really maintaining a very urban look and feel.

Chris Cassidy asked the Commission if there were any questions with respect to the plan and the layout.

Lonnie Mimms stated that this must be a slightly newer version. They have the back corner building was originally kind of a U-shaped. Is this a later version? Chris Cassidy stated that was correct. Mimms stated that he saw this earlier at the DDA meeting. They have reconfigured a little bit on there where they have created more of...the parking is more in the rear at this point. They have pushed it back. Cassidy stated that was correct. Mimms stated that this doesn't really show up necessarily on a site plan, but on the ground floor units that face Norcross and Frazier they had talked about having kind of an entrance into a courtyard to pull it to the street. Make it a little more street friendly instead of having this long building that although it is on the street, it doesn't really have any way of getting into it. Is it still Cassidy's idea that he is going to have it so one can go directly into some of those lower units from the street?

Chris Cassidy stated that it is. With this architectural design each of these buildings will have one or two public entries into the building. All of the ground floor units will have either a stoop and/or a small private space that will be between the sidewalk and the buildings. So, if one lives on the ground floor, he will have direct access to the street. In addition to that, if one lives in an upper floor unit he will have the ability to come down a set of stairs and really exit onto either Norcross Street, Frazier Street or one of the internal streets without really having to go through a parking lot or walking to the end of the building and going out before he goes back onto Norcross Street. So, there will be multiple portal entries. So, as one is walking down the street he will really be able to look in and he will be able to see through the buildings to an urban courtyard or have access directly into each of the buildings.

Tony Landers asked if there were any other questions or comments from the Commission.

Alex Paulson asked if the parking garages the three buildings on the perimeter there on the outside. Is that the parking structures? There are three of them. Chris Cassidy stated that currently the project is all surface parking. They are showing three garages. At this point those could move around the site plan. They have located them here for now but

they may move those internally. So, for example, in this area right here they might put a covered garage in this location, in this location and then probably one that is a little more centered in the property so it is not sitting on the property line. Alex Paulson added that will help break down some of those parking lots as well. Cassidy stated that was correct. Paulson stated that he thinks that is a great plan compared to the one that is in the book. It is a lot more sensitive to the streets than this plan, which is a lot more urban.

Chris Cassidy thanked Alex Paulson and stated that they think that with this internal street that is created here, it will flow nicely. With the parallel parking one will get the look and the feel of either Norcross or Frazier Street but he thinks that will slow traffic down and it really draw one in. From an interior space they will have a nice sort of a public courtyard here and then in some of the buildings they will have their own more private courtyards or green space.

Tony Landers asked Courtney Lankford just as a matter of process, he is sure she would have done this anyway...what is being presented and what was in the agenda are really two different things and the comments that are being made are really on a somewhat different design.

Courtney Lankford stated that the site plan that is in the Commission's packet is the original one. The one the applicant is showing them right now, which is the color rendering site plan is the one that was submitted this afternoon at 4:30 p.m. So, the one that the Commission had a chance to review has been tweaked slightly. Staff is asking that the Commission review the new revised submitted site plan. If there are elements they liked of the original one they can discuss that. If they have suggestions for future changes they can suggest those. But this is just a chance to comment and those comments will be reviewed by the applicant as well as the Planning Commission and mayor and city council.

Tony Landers stated that he thinks that is adequate to getting it in the record.

Jackie Deibel stated that during the process, the entire rezoning or conditional use process which is four months from beginning to end. The applicant does have the opportunity to revise the site plan several times throughout the process and they normally do that after they go to a Design Review Board or HPC meeting and then the neighborhood meeting which the applicant has next week. Once they hear comments from those Boards and then the neighbors, they normally send in a revised plan. These gentlemen turned in a revised site plan a little early, which is fine and that is why they are showing it to the HPC tonight because this is the plan that they want to send to Planning Commission and staff would like the HPC's comments on this one.

Chris Cassidy added as the process has been a little fluid, really as late as yesterday they received additional comments based on meetings that they had last week. So, they wanted to get those incorporated. They just filed the revised plan today so Cassidy apologized for the late notice but they think this is a much better plan. They have listened to the public

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comment and they think that it was very constructive and positive. They tried to incorporate that and so the applicant would just ask if the Commission could comment on this plan.

Mike Walsh stated that he would like to thank Chris Cassidy because he has done more than just go through the traditional routes to get out. He has been really reaching out as a resident down in that area. He has reached out to several groups and residents to get feedback and Walsh appreciates that. He really thinks that how Cassidy has addressed Frazier Street and Norcross Street, which are the two main traffic patterns in there with pulling the buildings up to the street and even in those entrances on there on Frazier where it the parking used to come all the way up. Now it is kind of a single lane back so the parking is even more in the rear off of Frazier Street on the original design. Walsh likes the whole concept of that as a resident in that area. He thinks it is a great area as they move forward with elevations to introduce an innovation. They are showing kind of a unique innovation design there. Walsh thinks this particular spot where there is not a lot of traditional historic buildings in that area is a great area to bring innovation in. When he says innovation, innovation in design.

Walsh wanted to thanked Chris Cassidy first for following the process and reaching out and second just commenting that he really likes the design as it relates to Frazier and Norcross and encouraging him to be innovative when he gets to the elevations.

Alex Paulson stated that he noticed on the old site plan they had parallel parking on Norcross and Frazier. Does that one also have parallel parking? Chris Cassidy stated that on the old plan he does not believe they had parallel parking on Norcross. They did on Frazier and they currently do today. The differences from the last plan, too, the original plan on the new street coming off of Norcross had head in parking. They have changed that to parallel. In addition the new street coming off of Frazier, they have changed that to parallel as well.

Alex Paulson asked if there was a reason why they wouldn't be putting it on Norcross. Chris Cassidy stated that it was really just the speed that cars were traveling on that road. They felt like it may not be as appropriate. Paulson stated it would slow them down.

Chris Cassidy stated that he doesn't know if they couldn't look at that. To be honest he doesn't recall if the transportation review had any comments with respect to that.

Alex Paulson stated that he knows they are looking at Norcross Street for future changes down the road. So that may be something that is brought up.

Chris Cassidy stated that he will look at that because obviously if they did some parallel parking along Norcross it would potentially free up some parking on the interior which might give them a little more area for green space. He will look into that.

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Mike Walsh stated that the applicant has also talked about the variance on parking and the HPC's comment on that. Walsh stated that he is fully supportive of it because of what it does for the streetscape there and the parking spots back. One can see it is already kind of a tight space with parking. He would hate to increase that by another 90 parking spaces and then get rid of the great aesthetic Cassidy has on it now.

Richard Hallberg stated that he too thinks that this is a much improved plan specifically because of the lack of visibility of the parking from the two streets. In their packets all of the perspective views are for Norcross Street and these are appropriate facades for the Frazier Street. He would also recommend and think that it is very important to have a streetscape that looks like that so that they don't have the back of a building facing Frazier Street.

Chris Cassidy stated that the rendering that is in the Commission's package was incorrectly labeled Norcross Street. So, this should be Frazier Street. That should be a Frazier Street elevation and that would be starting at this corner and it would be looking down, he guessed north on Frazier Street to Norcross Street. Richard Hallberg stated that covers exactly what he had to say there.

Richard Hallberg had a comment just for the architects. Handling the water off of those roofs is going to be interesting. So, he is sure they will deal with that and however they handle the parapets to make sure that they don't have to have huge downspouts to carry water that is all funnel into one or two locations.

Richard Hallberg stated that he had a question for Courtney Lankford. Is this in the...is Frazier Street Apartments in the Grove Way? Was that in that overlay district? Lankford stated that this area is within the historic district and the Grove Way. Hallberg stated that his personal opinion is that it be taken out of the historic district because he feels that this architecture has no context or compatibility with Roswell's historic district. He is not against the architecture. He would prefer not to see a lot what he calls "brick and tans" stucco and patches of brick here and there. He would prefer a longer lasting exterior treatments so that they are building buildings that are designed to last 100 years instead of 30 years. He knows that is not part of the apartment concept business. He thinks it is really important that they honor the streetscape with the façade. That is Hallberg's biggest point; that they don't create communities that back up to the main thoroughfares. Because that excludes them from the community and he sees that as damaging the value of Roswell's image.

Hallberg stated that these designs in his opinion have no historic context and he thinks they should honor them for what they are and not try to call them historic. He would like to not be pinned into being forced to accept that kind of architecture in important streetscapes in the historic district. That is really where he is going with this. Hallberg would prefer to remove this from the historic district as a practice and reserve their core historic district and keep it a little purer.

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Tony Landers stated that he was going to ask a process question. And the reason he is going to ask this is he wants to think that it would be beneficial to this process to have points of consensus. Landers stated that he just asked Lonnie Mimms if he would attempt that. All of these comments are going to go forward as part of the record. But Landers thought it would be beneficial to say these are the entirety of the comments but these are the consensus comments. The points that everyone agreed to and supported.

Richard Hallberg stated that he had one comment on that. He thinks it is important for the mayor and city council and the Planning Commission to hear different opinions. They are the ones who are going to make those decisions. This is not just a recommendation from the whole HPC. It is a series of comments and Hallberg thinks it is appropriate that they signify who is or who is not in favor of those things. But he does not think those comments should be excluded simply to fit within a recommendation from the entire Commission.

Tony Landers submitted that they are not going to get to a consensus about what he would imagine the superior approach of failing that. They will pass on the entire record. He has a couple of comments himself. One is that he is going to disagree with Richard Hallberg about having this area removed from the historic district.

Landers asked Lonnie Mimms if he has something else. Mimms stated that they will have the opportunity later to comment on the actual design. It is his understanding that they are simply looking at the site plan today and from what he has heard he would propose that they have a unified statement of in favor of having the reduction in parking spaces and also in favor of having the new design, which was presented to the HPC today. Mimms has not heard anyone say anything contrary to that and he thinks it would be a very strong statement to the mayor and city council to support having the reduction in parking spaces and having the new design direction. He thinks the applicant is definitely moving in a very positive direction here.

Tony Landers asked if everyone, understanding that this discussion record is going to be forwarded in its entirety, but with those consensus points of view, is the HPC okay that it be passed in that way?

Not hearing any objection Landers stated it will be passed on just in that fashion.

Landers asked if there was anything anyone would like to add.

Mike Walsh clarified that the Commission is going to come up with a consensus statement which he thinks Lonnie Mimms just did a good job of paraphrasing for them. In addition to that they are going to state that there were various views on the Commission. Walsh is one that liked the more innovative design. This is one that is not so he does not want to get that diluted. It is comfortable with the consensus when they move into language that starts coming across as varied then Walsh thinks it is important that they say that.

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Tony Landers stated that if Walsh can imagine and he does not mean this in a literal way but there would be the body of this discussion that would have a cover letter that would say, "These are the consensus points of view from the HPC." In fact, that might be exactly how it looks.

Richard Hallberg stated that he thinks the consensus view should be talked specifically to parking and those issues that they are asking for the HPC's input specifically on. And they can do consensus on other items too, but he thinks that it is important that the HPC has a concise consensus of how they approach the parking and whatever the other questions were.

Mike Walsh stated that Lonnie Mimms' comments were with regard to the new design concept and parking. It was limited to that and Walsh thinks that sums it up nicely.

Richard Hallberg stated that he failed to cover that but he agrees with what they are doing both with the parking and with the building design.

Tony Landers asked if there were any other comments. There were none. He thanked the applicants and hoped they got what they needed at least at this first step.

Chris Cassidy thanked the HPC and stated that he appreciates their consideration and the scope of their comments. Landers stated that he appreciates the work that the applicant is doing here.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tony Landers asked if there were any comments on the minutes.

Lonnie Mimms made a motion to approve the Wednesday, February 13, 2013 minutes as published. Alex Paulson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by all that were in attendance. Mike Walsh abstained as he was not at the February 13th meeting.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Tony Landers, Chairman
Roswell Historic Preservation Commission

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